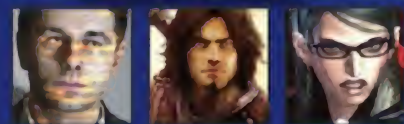
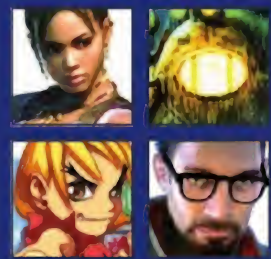
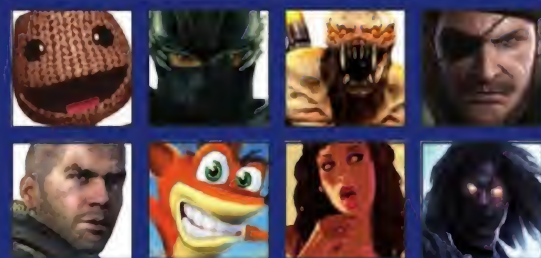
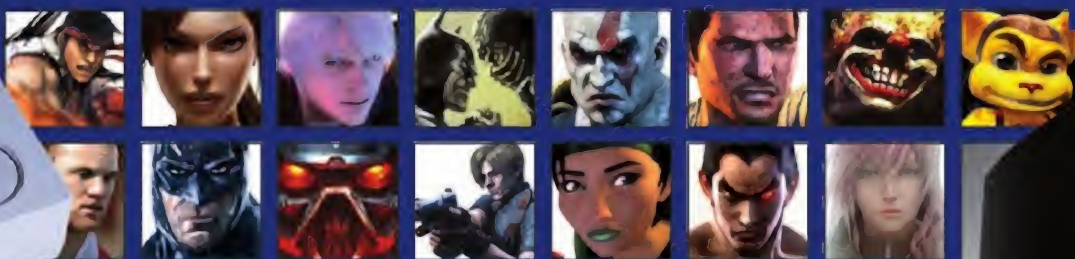


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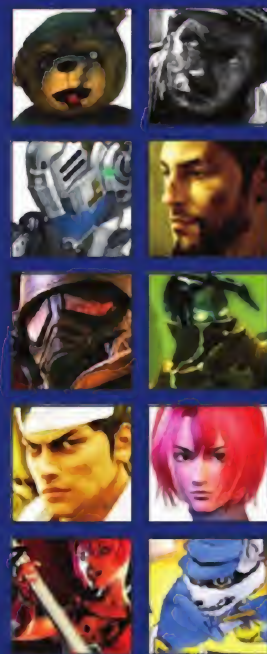
IT'S THE MAGIC NUMBER



200
GREATEST
PLAYSTATION
MOMENTS

The image is a promotional graphic for a list of the 200 greatest PlayStation moments. The title is written in a large, white, serif font on a dark blue background. Surrounding the text are several small, square images of iconic PlayStation characters and scenes, including Kratos from God of War, the character from the original Resident Evil, and the character from the original Final Fantasy VII. The overall design is clean and professional, typical of a magazine or website feature.

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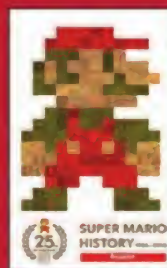
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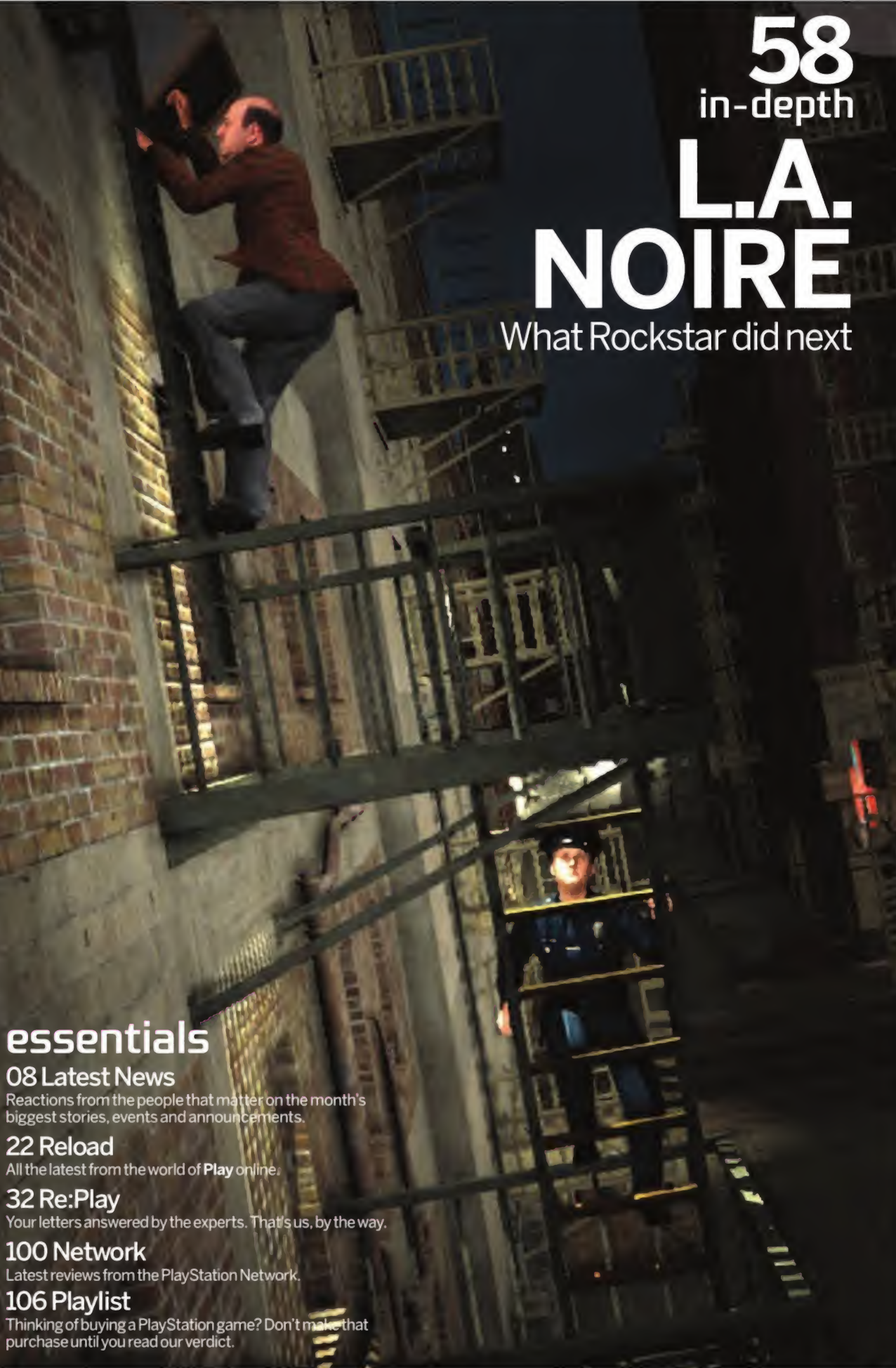
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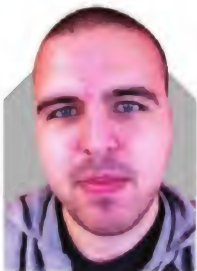
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PlayStation 3 PSN PSP 演劇端末

Welcome PLAY

The UK's best independent PlayStation magazine

15 years and counting



Hello! Apologies for the terrifying face confronting you on the left. You have presumably grown accustomed to dapper **Play** gentlemen, only to witness the slow evolution of man in the Editor's hot seat over the years to the mess of manmeat and facial fuzz sitting before you. My charm will make up for it! Hopefully.

This is a grand celebration of all things PlayStation

More enjoyable and infinitely sexier to watch has been the evolution of PlayStation. From its humble beginnings on our shores some 15 years ago to the PlayStation 3 behemoth we have now, it's the sort of journey that could be described as a 'rollercoaster ride', if rollercoasters did somehow involve Sony, Blu-ray and Americans insulting our mothers online. As we've come a long way and as you're holding the 200th issue of **Play** in your hands, we've compiled an exhaustive list of the 200 greatest PlayStation moments.

But this issue isn't just about the past! Lord, no. In some crazy time paradox science has yet to understand, we're about the future, too. Our 11 In 2011 feature will tell you what the hottest gaming titles are, with hot-off-the-screenshot-press looks at *Batman: Arkham City*, *Killzone 3* being ripped apart and *LittleBigPlanet 2* leading the charge on our beloved console. Beyond that you can read our in-depth report on *L.A. Noire* and exclusive hands-on with *Ace Combat: Assault Horizon* along with looks at *Deus Ex: Human Revolution*, *Portal 2*, *Dragon Age II*... phew.

Just to confuse the time analogy even further, there's a slice of the present as we've gone in-depth on *Gran Turismo 5* with a monster review, while *Sly Cooper* and *Prince Of Persia* bring older classics bang up to date.

Some 200 issues after **Play** began life, this is a grand celebration of all things PlayStation – past, present and future. So bottom's up, here's to another 200!

R. King
Editor

contributors



Simon Miller

This is the final instalment of Miller's adventures in mayonnaise. While in Tenerife, he picked up a tuna salad sandwich – for once willing to take on its mayo goodness. It turned out, though, that the ingredient listed as 'yoghurt' actually meant 'yoghurt'. **TENERIFE: SIMON MILLER WANTED YOUR MAYO AND YOU LET HIM DOWN. You let him down.**



Darran Jones

Darran hasn't featured much here in recent months, but he's back. He recently was involved in something noteworthy, but it involved a rival console and its body controller peripheral. Needless to say, twirls were made and videos were uploaded to YouTube. We highly recommend searching for 'Retro Gamer Daz' on the video service.



Jon Gordon

Jon was pre-warned that he would be featured in this section. Given a month to come up with something thrilling, he utterly failed. He spent his month "asking devs questions, eating sausages, drinking coffee and sniffing". This may seem like a normal month, but that's the point – we're supposed to revel in our rock star status here*.

*Note: we are not rockstars.

the PLAY promise

Play solemnly swears (raises right hand) to bring you the best PlayStation magazine that is humanly possible.

We will always bring you the most in-depth, impartial, honest reviews and will never bow down to PR or advertising pressure. We have some of the most experienced reviewers in

the industry and we're not afraid to use them. And we take our own screenshots so you can see what the game looks like *when you play it*. We will be the first to break the biggest stories, the first to cover the biggest games and in the most detailed way. We will only ever bang on about the very best PlayStation games, the ones that we would pay our own cash for. We aren't afraid of expressing an opinion, especially when it's for your benefit.

So don't expect our previews to simply regurgitate a load of internet or press release tosh – we'll be telling you whether a game is looking good or not, regardless of the stage of the code.

We want to fuel your passion for gaming like no other magazine and we want you to trust everything you read here. If you don't then you can simply stop buying it. That's how confident we are that you'll love **Play**. Promise.

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Where fact + opinion ÷ PlayStation = the truth

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"The Executioner is one of my favourite creatures in the Resident Evil games. He's mythic" – Paul WS Anderson, director, Resident Evil: Afterlife, p. 12

GTA III RULES THEM ALL

Developers name Grand Theft Auto III most influential game

As part of **Play**'s 200th Issue celebrations, game developers from around the world have chosen *Grand Theft Auto III* as the most influential game released on a PlayStation console. While some chose *Metal Gear Solid*, *Tomb Raider* or even *Ico* as the game they felt had the most impact on the games industry, it was still a landslide victory for Rockstar's first *GTA* game on the PS2. And it's hard to argue with their assessment given the number of games since the release of *GTA III* that have been inspired by its design or tone.

"On PlayStation 2, *Grand Theft Auto III* didn't just establish the sandbox genre – it also pioneered the use of darker, more mature themes in its narrative to appeal to older, more mainstream demographics," Hermen Hulst, MD of *Killzone 3* developer Guerrilla Games, told us. "I think it's difficult to ignore the influence of a game like *Grand Theft Auto* on the industry, whether this influence is considered positive or negative," added Quantic Dream's David Cage, hinting

at some of the darker history and association of the series.

The *GTA* series has not been without its controversies and could be accused of having a negative impact due to so many games trying to replicate its gameplay as a means to finding success, but most devs feel

III," he told us. "I didn't think such a game was possible till I played it. Ever since it launched we've seen the epic scale open-world adventure that it nailed become one of the most important genres we have in technology, business and entertainment terms."

When *GTA III* was released on the PS2 it was a game changer

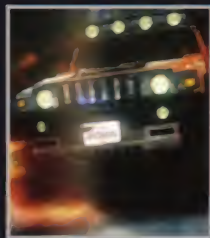
far more positive about its influence. "When *GTA III* was released on the PS2 it was a game changer," said Darrell Gallagher, head of studio at Crystal Dynamics. "An open world, featuring rich non-linear storytelling with mature characters and setting made the title a landmark in videogames. The ability for *Grand Theft Auto* to weave antihero and pop culture together has influenced a huge number of games."

GTA shook the industry from its first entry, something that *MotorStorm* director Matt Southern recognised. "GTA was seminal, but I'd go for *GTA*

And, of course, developers of some of today's most successful sandbox games recognise the debt they owe to *GTA III*. "I have to choose *GTA III*," *Assassin's Creed: Brotherhood* producer Vincent Pontbriand said. "One of the first very successful games to create a fully immersive open world. A game in which you could not only follow the main story but also where you can create your own and tell your friends about it. A game, of course, that influenced the competition to create other successful franchises such as *Assassin's Creed*."

The most influential game on PlayStation has to be *GTA III*. The creation of a living open world, recognisably realistic, but with a unique creative framework and style, was bold, and, of course, stunningly well executed - Jonathan Smith, development director at TT Games, developer of *Lego Star Wars*

Need To Know IMPORTANT GAMING NEWS YOU WON'T WANT TO MISS



Hard times for devs

It's been announced that Harmonix and Bizarre Creations will be sold off by their respective publishers. Viacom, owner of the MTV brand, has chosen to sell Harmonix after the poor performance of the *Rock Band* games. Activision is also seeking a buyer for Bizarre after *Blur* and *Blood Stone* performed poorly.



Stacking up hits

THQ and Double Fine Productions have revealed the next digital release from the acclaimed developer called *Stacking*. This new game involving the use of Russian dolls (or matryoshka dolls) is being headed up by *Brütal Legend* art director Lee Petty and has a unique look as well as unique gameplay.



Jack Sparrow gets Lego-fied

A new addition to the Lego games series has been announced, as *Lego Pirates Of The Caribbean* will be heading to the PS3 and PSP in May 2011. The release will coincide with the latest movie, *On Stranger Tides*. The game will be based on the original trilogy.

word on the tweet



TimOfLegend

"Forget about holding hands. I just made scrambled eggs for a hooker. Guess what game I'm playing!"

Tim Schafer of Double Fine is probably playing *Heavy Rain*, otherwise we'd be concerned.

Grand Theft Auto III. It spawned an entire genre pretty much on its own, one that is now a considerable chunk of the market – David Abzug, design lead at Volition, developer of Red Faction: Guerrilla

Developers' thoughts on PlayStation's most-influential game

GTA III has changed the face of realistic 3D videogames forever, adding freedom and story to one consistent bucket – Jarek Kolar, senior gameplay producer at 2K Czech, developer of Mafia II

There are some big ones, but I believe that **Grand Theft Auto III** has been the most influential on many fronts – Randy Pitchford, CEO and president of Gearbox Software, developer of Borderlands

There's no doubt that **Grand Theft Auto III** changed the world of gaming forever. Taking open-world gaming to the next level – Kim Krogh and Karsten Lund, game directors at IO, developer of Kane & Lynch

GTA III made us all rethink the structure of what games are, introducing the world to action-based sandbox gameplay – Nate Fox, game director at Sucker Punch, developer of inFamous

To this day, games are taking creative licence from the formula originally executed to perfection by **Grand Theft Auto III**. I don't remember a game ever doing a better job at letting the player explore a world and **Grand Theft Auto III** created the perfect combination of that freedom and 'mission' tasks. That was such a big part of the fun of the game. Genius – Ed Boon, executive producer for NetherRealm Studios

PlayStation Pies

What game developers had to say about PlayStation in pie chart form

FAVOURITE PLAYSTATION GAME



Resident Evil	15%
Uncharted 2	12%
Metal Gear Solid	11%
Shadow Of The Colossus	11%
Final Fantasy VII	7%
Ratchet & Clank	5%
LittleBigPlanet	5%
Okami	5%
PaRappa The Rapper	5%
Katamari Damacy	5%
Ico	5%
Heavy Rain	2%
Grand Theft Auto III	2%
God Of War	2%
WipEout	2%
Burnout 3: Takedown	2%
Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance	2%
Pro Evolution Soccer	2%

MOST INFLUENTIAL PLAYSTATION GAME



Grand Theft Auto III	39%
Metal Gear Solid	21%
PaRappa the Rapper	5%
Ico	5%
Resident Evil	5%
Tomb Raider	5%
Uncharted 2	5%
Final Fantasy VII	3%
Guitar Hero	3%
WipEout	3%
Heavy Rain	3%
God Of War	3%

BIGGEST PLAYSTATION INNOVATION



Mainstream gaming	27%
Controller design	24%
Disc media	24%
3D graphics	13%
Voice and music	3%
Memory cards	3%
Multimedia	3%
Development culture	3%

What has the PlayStation ever done for us?

Developers tell Play what they think the PlayStation consoles have brought to the games industry



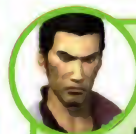
The PlayStation brought full voice acting into the gaming arena. Before PlayStation, you simply didn't have enough space to do voice beyond a few choice selections. The PlayStation made voice acting a must-have in games, and if you look back at the pre-PlayStation titles, it's amazing how much we had to rely on goofy text conventions or no voice at all. Voice made games human in a very real way – Timothy Gerritsen, director of product development at Irrational Games



The development culture they fostered with PS2 was so refreshing. There was a drive for creativity that happened in the early-2000s that spawned this industry. If not for that and if not for what Sony did as a publisher at the time, too, and what PlayStation did for the industry, we would be far, far from where we are today – Ru Weerasuriya, co-founder of Ready At Dawn



I remember the PSone getting into club culture and it was good at making it feel a bit trendier. It meant it wasn't as embarrassing telling your friends what you do for a living, because suddenly they were more like 'that must be cool'. It's not quite on par with being a rock star, but it felt like it was edging towards that realm – Mark Healey, creative director at Media Molecule



The technical revolution that made it possible to play with 3D polygons was probably the most prominent thing that we've seen since the start of PlayStation – Masayoshi Kikuchi, producer for Sega



By embracing the CD support it made cartridges obsolete allowing for larger, fully voiced games. Suddenly console games could go beyond what was typically expected from them. They could be more epic and cinematic.

The DVD format is now the basic format of all games. However, digital delivery is now slowly but surely threatening what we take for granted – Jean-François Dugas, game director at Eidos Montreal



They got the media right (CD, then DVD, then Blu-ray). Inexpensive and high capacity for lots of rich media! This seems obvious, but every system prior had used cartridges and people thought optical discs wouldn't have the bandwidth and seek times to make great games. They also did really well with the design of the controller, and the sequence of upgrades – first dual analogue, then DualShock. The two thumb sticks are also essential, and I give them credit for getting that right early on – Brian Fleming, producer at Sucker Punch



I am proud that, while EyeToy didn't reach everybody, I think it paved the way for a lot of new things to happen; things like *SingStar* and *Guitar Hero* happened partly because EyeToy happened first. They don't use its technology or anything but that way of creating a peripheral that goes with a gameplay experience I think was part of that – Richard Marks, Sony R&D manager



PlayStation is the first console that really helped gaming start to have a wider, more mainstream appeal. It was the first console I remembered hearing referenced a lot in TV shows and movies – Pete Hines, vice president of Bethesda Softworks



For me it's the whole package the PS3 offers – online connectivity, downloadable HD movies, Trophies and Blu-ray. I've really come to love it, as a home console it's amazing – Brett Rector, producer at LucasArts

YOUR SAY Forum Picks Your favourite PlayStation game EVA!!!

Has to be *Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas* for me. I remember getting it on PS2 and playing it for months on end. Plus it's an 18 and I was only like 13 when I started playing it, so I felt like a badman – **Equinox10**

My favourite is *Shadow Of The Colossus*. It was really addictive and was also so different compared to games from that time period. The whole game just had a mystical feel and left the player feeling alone and almost helpless while he was on this mission – **kev schmit**

I'm going to say *LSD: Dream Emulator* on PSone. For those not in the know, it's a trippy game where you navigate dreams

Visit www.play-mag.co.uk/forum to have your say

and see weird, surreal sh!t. Kind of like what *Inception* would have been like if directed by David Lynch – **hazy89**

Metal Gear Solid on PSone. It's the first game that taught me to be patient and wait for the right moment to strike, and the first of its kind to be totally focused on stealth, with some genius boss battles scattered here and there. I still play it to this day, and still am not bored with it, and that's a rarity – **the bossman**

My favourite game ever has got to be *TimeSplitters: Future Perfect*. It was the first FPS that I ever had and it was just as exciting and fun as any online shooter – **robinz26**

For me it's a split between the *GT* series, the *GTA* series and the *FF* series.

All of them I have put in hundreds of hours of play time, and with *GTA* and *FF* games I go back just for the story – **rbl007**

My favourite PS game so far has got to be *Star Wars Battlefront*. I just could not stop playing it – **Talking Yak**

My favourite PlayStation game has to be *TimeSplitters 2* – **supermarioex**

My favourite game would have to be *Skate 2*. I played that thing to death, I beat everything and I mean EVERYTHING – **skrudge7**

Part of the **NOW Gamer** Network

INSTANT EXPERT

All of the pros with none of the prose



DOS & DON'TS

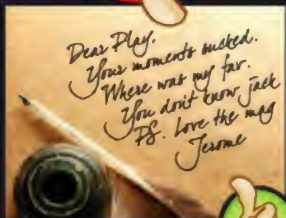
Important lessons from Play this month



DO: Dig out some of your old PSone and PS2 games and give them a play. You may be surprised by how good they still are.



DON'T: Be too upset if you find that some of them are absolute tosh, though. Sometimes games just don't age all that well.



DO: Write in and tell us about your favourite PlayStation moments, especially if we missed something in our list.



DON'T: Forget to enter our amazing £5,000 prize giveaway with loads of amazing hardware and gifts to be won.

Read our 200 Greatest PS Moments starting on page 27

ALL TIME Charts

Cataloguing everything that's big in the world of PlayStation

PS CHART

- Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas** Rockstar
As you'll begin to see Rockstar has dominated PlayStation for years and this was its best effort. **99%**
- Gran Turismo 3: A-Spec** Sony
One of the finest Gran Turismo games, and the first to be released on the PS2. **91%**
- Grand Theft Auto: Vice City** Rockstar
The middle child of the GTA family on PS2, but one of the favourites with massive sales. **97%**
- Grand Theft Auto III** Rockstar
The true original that sent shockwaves through the videogames industry. **98%**
- Gran Turismo** Sony
The first in the GT series and still one of the most important games in the PSone's history. **97%**
- Gran Turismo 4** Sony
More amazing automobile love and another showcase of the power beneath the hood of the PS2. **96%**
- Final Fantasy VII** Square Enix
A groundbreaking RPG that brought Japanese gaming to new heights in the West. **93%**
- Gran Turismo 2** Sony
GT2 cemented its reputation before it sky-rocketed on the next generation of console. **92%**
- Call Of Duty: Modern Warfare 2** Activision
The only entry from the PS3... so far. There's still time for others to make the grade. **94%**
- Final Fantasy VIII** Square
The less-talked-about sequel to FFVII still got a higher score in Play as FF never took hold. **96%**

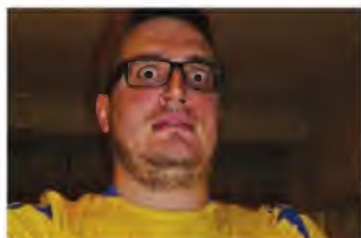
PSP CHART

- Grand Theft Auto: Liberty City Stories** Rockstar
Successfully bringing the 3D world of GTA to PSP was no mean feat, but proved hugely successful. **95%**
- Monster Hunter Freedom Unite** Capcom
Underappreciated in the West perhaps, this series refuses to slow down in its native Japan. **77%**
- Grand Theft Auto: Vice City Stories** Rockstar
A little more GTA love on PSP and more of the same great gameplay on the go. **96%**
- Daxter** Sony
We weren't too impressed by Daxter's solo debut but the gaming public seemed to go mad for it. **65%**
- Ratchet & Clank: Size Matters** Sony
Proving that mascots still hold some sway, Ratchet and his buddy have always been handheld faves. **78%**

*This chart is compiled from sales, our opinions and the games you're playing. If you're playing a recent, quality title that isn't on our chart, head on over to the forum and let us know about it.

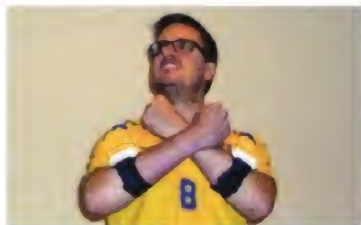
Fitness Quest IX

MONTH ONE:
the fat man cometh



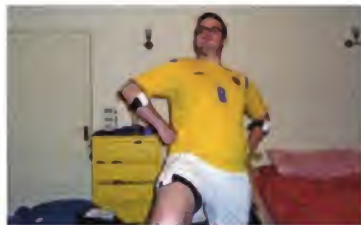
WE MADE AN executive decision when *EA Sports Active 2* came into the office: we would review it, as standard, and we would stand by our verdict. But at the same time, we would take on the challenge of using the game to actually get fit in what some are referring to as 'The Most In-Depth Review Ever Written'.

As such, over the course of the next few months, Ian will be donning the heart-rate monitor and stretching those stretchy things the game/workout program comes with to see if he really can



change from a fat slob with a beer gut into a less-fat slob with a smaller beer gut.

You'll probably want some vital statistics of the out-of-shape staffer, so here are some embarrassing numbers to go with the already-embarrassing picture. He stands six feet three inches (191cm ish) tall. He weighs 15 stone 10 pounds (100kg, 230lbs). He doesn't care about his BMI because that was nonsense made up by a Belgian mathematician in



the 1800s. Seriously, it was – look it up. He also has two dodgy knees and a seriously dodgy ankle.

And so this particular odyssey begins, and we are left with a few questions for the future: will it work? Will Ian get bored and stop doing it? Will he smash his TV up while trying a particularly vigorous session? Will he end up all muscley and buff? Only the future will tell, and we'll be keeping you updated right here, every month, with how things transpire.

Better the devil you know?

Sucker Punch backs the new Dante design in DmC

Speaking exclusively to *Play*, the maker of *inFamous 2* expressed its interest in seeing how the initial uproar surrounding the redesign of Dante for Ninja Theory's *Devil May Cry* reboot affects the game's development. Sucker Punch was itself in the middle of a character redesign storm when it revealed a new look for its lead character Cole MacGrath, based on a new voice actor. Ultimately Sucker Punch went back to the drawing board and came up with a third option, based more on Cole's original design, but it looks at the moment as if Ninja Theory and Capcom are standing firm.

"We are interested to see how they handle it," communications director Ken Schramm revealed to us. "We handled it one way and I'd actually like to see them not change it, just to see how that goes. Because we know how it's going to go if they change it, because we still get people who say, 'well, I did like the new Cole.' But if they stick to their guns – like people sometimes accuse us of not sticking to

We still get people who say, 'well, I did like the new Cole'

our guns – and change that character we're definitely looking at it. Trust me, we're definitely looking to see what the outcome of that is going to look like."

However, he seemed to feel that the circumstances surrounding each character may have an impact on their differing



The new Cole created a lot of controversy for *inFamous*'s developer.

approaches to negative fan feedback.

"We just had one title before this," said Schramm. "They've got four titles already with that guy established, so they're really going against the grain."

"We have our own forums and when it gets up to 16 pages about Cole, it's like 'Okay, we've got to listen a little bit.' It's not like it was two or three pages and a select half-dozen people posting 40 times. We did the calculations and numbers and all that and it was in our interest to change it."



It will certainly be interesting to see how things pan out for both games, with *inFamous 2* expected some time in the first half of 2011 and *DmC* yet to be given a firm release date.

word on the tweet

DuvalMagic
"Just finished *Enslaved*. It's an incredibly well-done game – it just needs to feel some more love from press and fans."
We tried our best Randy Pitchford of Gearbox, but no one seems to be listening.

The Executioner's Song

Resident Evil director hails Capcom's monster roster

Resident Evil: *Afterlife* director Paul WS Anderson has revealed that the most recent game in the series really helped him to find new and interesting action scenes for the movie. Speaking ahead of the Blu-ray release of his 3D sequel, Anderson admitted that coming up with new ways to smash up zombies was becoming hard, but that the *Resi* games continue to inspire him. "We were really helped by Capcom because they introduced a whole new breed of creatures and undead in *Resident Evil 5* that made everything fresh again," he said.

There were a couple of characters in particular that Anderson enjoyed bringing into *Afterlife*. "I think The Executioner is a phenomenal creature. He's one of my favourite creatures in the *Resident Evil* games. He's so striking. He's mythic. It was a pleasure to have him in the movie. Also, Wesker is one of the key villains for many *Resident Evil* games so it was really good to get him in the movie in a really substantial way for the first time. It's always hard to come up with new action and new killings. But I think we were helped by Capcom really stepping up their game in terms of the videogame franchise. It gave us more to work with."

Resident Evil: Afterlife is out on Blu-ray 3D and DVD on 10 January.



REASONS WHY...

Marvel Vs Capcom 3 is the fighter for you



INSANITY REIGNS

A game with this many characters will always end in madness on the screen and MVC 3 is no different. The level of insane action promises to top anything this franchise has ever shown us before.



IT'S MARVELLOUS

All your favourite Marvel characters are here with the likes of Wolverine, Magneto, Iron Man, Spider-Man and Deadpool all in attendance. But what of the new boys? Dormammu, She-Hulk, Super-Skrull, MODOK and X-23 good enough for you? Yes. Yes, they are.



IT'S CAPCOM-OUS Think the Marvel line-up is good? Then you should see the Capcom offering. The first-timers alone make for a pretty good list as Albert Wesker, Amaterasu, Arthur, Dante, Nathan Spencer, Trish, Viewtiful Joe and Zero all make their MVC debuts.



PICK UP AND PLAY One of the best things about the MVC games is how easy to get into they are. Can you press buttons? You can play! Don't worry about combos, press buttons and watch the screen light up.

HIDDEN DEPTHS

MVC 3 is a great entry level for beat-'em-up noobs, but there's still plenty here for more experienced pugilists to get into. Some of the juggle and air combo attacks will take some practice.



QUESTION?

What next for LittleBigPlanet?

WITH LBP 2 JUST around the corner we've begun thinking about where Media Molecule could take the series next. Are there areas or genres that it could still attempt to conquer?

Totally digital

Since most of the games and levels you'll be playing in LBP 2 are likely to be user created (based on previous experience of the over 2 million levels available) making a wholly digital LBP makes a lot of sense. Who needs a disc?



Standalone creations

Since we're going disc-less could we take those created levels and allow them to be played on their own? Could there be an LBP YouTube-style channel for you to download and play creations independent of any main game?



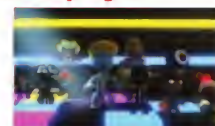
Open world

While a top-down view helps to open up LBP to open world, sandbox creations, there are still some limitations. The next stage is to fully support such worlds where there are no limitations to your exploration and interaction.



Massively multiplayer

From open world, the next logical step is a world that can be shared by many more players than is currently possible. We're talking about games and levels that could be populated entirely with human-controlled characters.



Platform for developers

LBP 2 is now a platform for games, but what if we had established, professional developers working on the LBP platform, developing games and levels using their own assets? Could they give themselves over to the LBP project.



ANSWER

The possibilities remain endless



Burnout still lives

Criterion insists Need For Speed and Burnout can coexist

Despite having spent a lot of time working on its superb interpretation of *Need For Speed*, Criterion has told us that its most famous series, *Burnout*, is far from dead.

Criterion's senior producer Matt Webster seemed to find it amusing that regardless of which project his team is working on, Criterion always gets asked about the 'other' project. "When we were doing *Burnout* it was all 'what about you guys doing *Need For Speed*?' and now we're doing *NFS* it's all 'what about *Burnout*?' he said. "*Burnout* is a part of Criterion, but we're a small group and we've just finished the next instalment of the

world's biggest driving game, but *Burnout*'s not dead. Absolutely not."

What's more he sees no reason the two titles can't coexist with one another given how long each of them has been around. "We were part of EA when we made *Revenge* and *Paradise*, so they've coexisted quite happily for some time," he told us. As it happens the two games could well end up informing each other as *Hot Pursuit*'s impressive Autolog feature was inspired in part by Criterion's online data for player behaviour on *Burnout Paradise*. What lessons it may learn now from *Need For Speed* we look forward to finding out.





Final Fantasy XIV

Q&A

Square Enix producer Hiromichi Tanaka speaks exclusively and candidly to Play about the latest Final Fantasy MMO's poor reception on PC and how he's looking to fix it for PS3

Reviews of the PC version of FFXIV have been critical, but how have you found the fan response to the game?

We are aware that a lot of players were unsatisfied with the game, so we've introduced our Road Map for version updates. We want to give our players more satisfaction with the game.

MMOs are difficult to review because they have the potential to constantly

We believe it's very important to listen to not only the positive feedback, but also the criticism

evolve. Do you think that should be taken into account?

Since it's an MMO it's really an endless process that can continue for five or ten years and the launch of the game doesn't mean the end of the development process. We believe it's very important to listen to not only the positive feedback, but also the criticism. Then we plan to implement those changes and grow along together with the players.

Did you already have a plan in place for changes to make between the PC and PS3 launches?

We have a plan for the coming year, but right now we're concentrating on our first version update and the feedback we got from the players. There were things we wanted to implement, but there are now far more things that we have decided to add.

And is the March release still in sight for FFXIV on PS3?

That's still what we're planning for. Once everything is fixed and PS3 players can comfortably enjoy the game that will be the best time for us to release the game.

What areas in particular were users asking for improvement on?

One of the biggest areas was the user interface. Because we were aiming for a simultaneous launch on PS3 and PC we were concentrating on creating some compatibility between them. Windows players

are finding that difficult, but for PS3 users, so long as they use a gamepad, it shouldn't be difficult for them.

In that case it would seem the PS3 had a real influence on design...

Yes. It did make some difference and while mouse and keyboard should have had a different UI, we were concentrating on the compatibility between the formats and sadly we couldn't have that different UI. We're now making a new UI for mouse and keyboard players.

Will PS3 players still have the option of using a mouse and keyboard?

Yes, that's the plan.

FFXIV on PC sold better in Europe and the US than in Japan. Do you feel that says a lot about your fan base?

One of the reasons behind those

numbers is that the Windows version was the first FFXIV to be released and in Japan the PC market is very small. In the US and EU there is a huge PC market.

Are you expecting sales to be better in Japan with the PS3 launch?

That's quite possible, but we also hope with the global launch every region will have more PS3 versions sold.

How has the market changed since the launch of FFXI?

When we released FFXI it was the very early days of the MMO market and it was considered quite a risky business, but after that World Of Warcraft came out and was very successful. Then MMOs became recognised worldwide.

Another area of growth within the MMO market has been free-to-play

games. Is this something you might look at in the future?

Free-to-play MMOs are one option, but even though it's called free it's still microtransaction based and so relies on some players paying a lot to keep the business going. People with money end up enjoying the game while casual players get bored and the game life cycle is going to be very short. That's okay for a packaged game if you sell it once and then add items. However, if you want a strong community the subscription model is more suitable and it will have a longer life cycle.

What lessons have you learnt that you'll take into your next project?

We want to learn from FFXIV and then improve the game itself. Everything we're learning from this early stage will be going back into improving the game.



Whatever the complaints, FFXIV still has that Final Fantasy magic.



BoysStuff.co.uk

serious fun

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Chairs**
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£129.95

The Pyramat PM420WR is perfect for all gamers. It's wireless, with an amazing sound system, has a breathable backrest, and is medium in size.



**X-Dream
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£249.95

The most comfortable, largest, best quality gaming chair around with wireless technology, surround sound, and stunning bass.



**X - Rocker
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This Deluxe, black leather, reclining, cinema and gaming chair comes complete with full surround sound, a powered subwoofer, and wireless technology! Link multiple chairs together wirelessly.



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Stand**
£189.95

The ultimate immersive experience for gaming, movies and music. With surround sound, enhanced vibration feedback, booming bass and arm rests it's the ultimate option.



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THE FANBOY
He only does PlayStation

word on the tweet



davidscottjaffe

"Just got a concept art sketch of our final *Twisted Metal* boss from Utah. F***ING FANTASTIC! DarkTooth is kiddie play compared to this! :)"

Twisted Metal director David Jaffe is clearly pleased with progress on his latest game.



RED PILL, BLUE PILL

The horrifying truth of Gran Turismo 5

Realism is overrated. It's been said before, but I think it's worth saying again. Realism is overrated. Sounds good, right? It's like one great big rejection of the status quo. Screw you realism. You've messed

from 'the real' and you would be right to do so. The culprit for this latest rejection is none other than Sony's *Gran Turismo 5*. Polyphony's racing series has been defining realism in gaming since day zero. With each new

title it has been pushing at the boundaries of what is possible on a PlayStation

GTS IS SO REALISTIC THAT IT'S BETTER THAN REALITY

with me one too many times and now you can go take a jump off the back of the wagon. I don't need you any more.

You may be wondering what has brought on this sudden epiphany and driven me away

console and this year like all the other years before it *Gran Turismo* has set a new benchmark. And for this reason I must reject realism.

Frankly, that which is supposed to be 'real' is dull and drab to me now. I have no place for it in my life. I belong

in *Gran Turismo 5*, a game so realistic that it's better than reality. Consider this my notice to the 'real' world. I'm done with it. *GT5* has everything that I need or desire. It's got day and night and sun and rain and a whole bunch in-between. More importantly it has the entire world squeezed into a single Blu-ray and for less than the cost of a train ticket between London and Manchester. What a waste of money a plane seems now.

And then there's the cars, so polished and slick and beautiful and yet objects that the so-called 'real' world would deny me. Screw you! I deserve these masterpieces of engineering in my hands. I have the right as a human being to drive such vehicles at ridiculous speeds, to crash them into the walls of the Nürburgring and to take photographs of them in Red Bull air hangars. So what if I don't have a driving licence. I've checked with the UN. Definitely a human right.

In life if I were given the opportunity it would probably result in my death, which would be a loss to the entire human race. In *Gran Turismo 5*,

thanks to the new damage models and physics I can send a Bugatti Veyron into a barrier at 200mph and just press reset to start again. Life has no reset button – a significant oversight on God's part I'd say – but PlayStation has had one since 1994. You would think that was enough time to get one added. In the console war of life I'm afraid reality is getting a serious kicking. It's probably even flagging behind the Wii. Ouch.

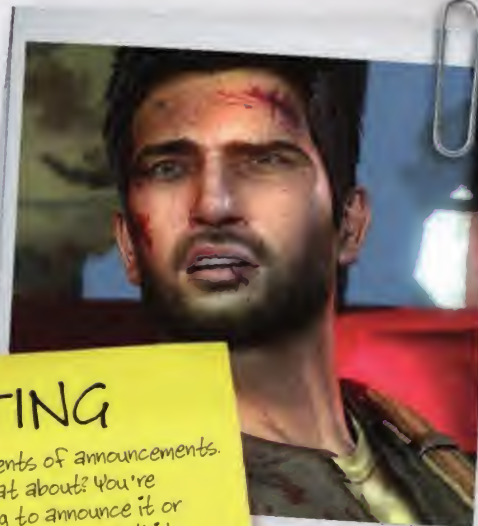
LIKING

Announcements. I like it when we get a new PS3 exclusive revealed. I even like it when multiplatform games get announced when the dev reveals that PS3 is the lead platform. Proper announcements give me something to look forward to and to flash in front of Xbox fans to make them cry. Nothing funnier than a fat, weeping Xbox.

HATING

Announcements of announcements. What's that about? You're either going to announce it or you're not. Do you really think people get more interested in your game because you gave them a countdown clock? Do you think all those website hits are going to translate to sales? All you're doing is pissing me off.

DISCLAIMER: The Fanboy is a PS3 enthusiast, but his views may never represent those of PlayStation or its affiliates.



We THEY: named Weight V and weight console h amply bui WE SAY: PS3's trirr it ourselve ports and connect

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{The Vault}

OBJECTS OF DESIRE

The toys, trinkets and tailoring that has our fires burning this month

Kisai Light Speed Watch

£54.05 at TokyoFlash.com

More watches of wonder from Tokyo Flash, whose special wristpieces continue to confound and delight us in equal measure. How does it come up with these ridiculous designs? Perhaps the mystery is part of their appeal.



Star Wars MP3 Alarm Clock Lamp

\$49.99 at ThinkGeek.com

Alarm clock? Check. Lamp? Check. MP3 dock? Check. Looks like Darth Vader or Boba Fett? Check. Is there anything this thing can't do? Seriously, though, this lamp/clock/MP3 dock has you covered while maintaining the geek chic look of your bedroom.



Scott Pilgrim Figure

£12.99 at ForbiddenPlanet.co.uk

Expected to be released in February this coming new year we've been waiting some time for an action figure of our slacker hero to emerge after the *Scott Pilgrim* film was released. As with most of the merchandise, though, this figure is based on the comic character rather than the actor Michael Cera.



Ezio Auditore Da Firenze Figurine

£24.99 each at Play.com

Based on Ezio's bearded appearance in *Assassin's Creed: Brotherhood*, we're liking this new look the Italian assassin has adopted. We're also liking his latest game a great deal. Anyway, this goes to the top of the wish list of *Creed* goodies as far as we're concerned.



Hot Rod £18.19 at MySoti.com

This shirt brings to mind one of our favourite games of recent years, *Brutal Legend*, and its awesome hot rod, the Druid Plow. What a machine.



Stop Wasting Arrows And Aim For Its Head, You Damn Fools!

£19.59 at MySoti.com

Having one of the all-time longest shirt names on MySoti is one thing. Showing a zombie being attacked by arrows and just looking pissed off is another. Superb.



CONDITIONS: Enter discount code when placing order. MySoti.com discount code only valid on featured items between 23 December and 19 January. Visit MySoti.com for even more great T-Shirts.



Rah! Black Hoodie

£24.99 at GenkiGear.co.uk

With the cold winter months now firmly wrapped around us all, like chilly dark bastards, what better way of staying both warm and safe than this hoodie? The warmth, of course, coming from the fact that it's a warm bit of clothing, and the safety coming from the fact that nobody's gonna mess with that monster.



DC Comic 75th Anniversary Kubricks

£79.99 at ForbiddenPlanet.com

This excellent set of limited-edition Kubricks features a range of *Batman* heroes and villains from all of their different incarnations, from the comics to the films and to the cartoons. Bat-fans couldn't really ask for a more comprehensive collection if you ask us.

Obedience. Duty. Loyalty Shirt

£20 at InsertCoin Clothing.com

Kicking off the PS3 shooter theme we've got this simple, but effective Helghast insignia and motto T-shirt. Just the thing for when you're rubbing your Xbox 360-loving friend's nose in the amazing looks and action of *Killzone 3* early next year. We're counting down the days right now.



SRPA Station Igloo Hoody

£30 at InsertCoin Clothing.com

We're all about the Sony shooters now that we've got the biggest driving game of this generation out of the way. *Resistance 3* is looking amazing and this hoody is just the thing to keep you warm during the cold winter nights before it is released.



Sony HDMI Cables

£24.01 to £189 at Sony.co.uk

Ooh, would you look at that HDMI cable. That's graphic that is. Almost like high-definition cable porn. Avert your eyes from this filth. But it is rather good-looking and is likely to give you amazing picture quality, even in 3D. The price range depends heavily on the length of cable you need.



Resident Evil 5 Kijuju Thermal Colour Change Mug

£9.99 at GachaWorld.com

The wintry nights need a warm drink to help keep you toasty while you play *Resi 5 Gold Edition* with Move. So why not keep it all in the same brand by using a *Resi 5* mug that changes colour depending on temperature.

Sackbot Figure

£4.99 at Play.com

We love these guys almost as much as we love Sackboy. They bring so much new life to *LBP 2* with their wonderful potential for interesting AI that it's hard to imagine the game without them. Now they can add new life to your desk too with these action figures.



HIGH FIVE

Five of the best weird winter warmers

Crime Scene Scarf

£11.99 at IWantOneOfThose.com

It's important to keep out the chill this winter, so warm it off with this Crime Scene Scarf. The chill may not cross the line. What crime took place around your neck? Only you know.



Tooks Headphone Hat

£24.99 at Firebox.com

Combining a warm head with the ability to listen to music is a top combination and one that this hat provides. It features neat pockets with speakers in for each of your ears.



Handerpants

£11.99 at Firebox.com

Underpants. For your hands. We're not sure what to make of this except the old adage of going home to play games in your pants may take on a slightly different meaning from before.

Beard Head

From \$24.99 at BeardHead.com

Long-time readers of *Play* will already know that we have a lot of love for Beard Heads having featured them in a previous issue and posted pictures of us wearing them on Facebook.



MusucBag

£89.95 at Firebox.com

A sleeping bag that you wear. In our opinion this is 2010's Snuggie/Slanket, a product we made popular in these very pages*. This envelops your entire body, though. *completely unofficial.

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UNCHARTED MADNESS TAKES HOLD

Sequel inspired by Ico apparently

THEY SAY: As fever pitch is already being reached over Naughty Dog's follow-up to *Among Thieves* it has come to light that a previous Sony exclusive is inspiring the new direction being taken in *Uncharted 3*. According to Naughty Dog's top... well, dog, Evan Wells, *Ico* is "the kind of game – that linear, narrative-driven experience – that we're focused on making right now. Everyone in the office has been influenced by it greatly; it's just a fantastic game." What this will mean for *Uncharted 3* is hard to say. Will Nathan be holding Elena's hand through the whole thing? We're sure to find out soon.

WE SAY: Er... we're calling bull-hockey on this one. We're not sure Wells was talking about *Ico* being a direct influence on the next *Uncharted* so much as *Ico* being a broad influence on the kind of games Naughty Dog has been making over the last few years. We might just as well say based on our interviews with various developers for this 200th issue celebration that Guerrilla Games is taking inspiration from *WipEout*, *Sucker Punch* is taking lessons from the original MGS and *Evolution* is basing *MotorStorm* on *GTA III*.

word on the tweet



JenovaChen

"Can't believe I just had a conversation with another astronaut who went to the moon. Very inspired..."

Journey developer Jenova

Chen came up with his latest game because of another such chat.

stop 
please



Bone headed

THEY SAY: Gaming causes rickets. Again. *The Sun* recently reported that a rise in children suffering with the bone disorder rickets had been linked with excessive videogame playing.

WE SAY: We had a similar story in issue 190. The report from Southampton that this was based on made no mention of games.



Cuba crisis

THEY SAY: Cuba is pissed. Apparently the communist nation is most upset by *Call Of Duty: Black Ops* and its depiction of an assassination attempt on its leader Fidel Castro. They didn't like that one bit.

WE SAY: We'd like to know how Cuba feels about Castro standing side by side with Nixon and Kennedy against zombies really.

CENTREFOLDS CENSORED

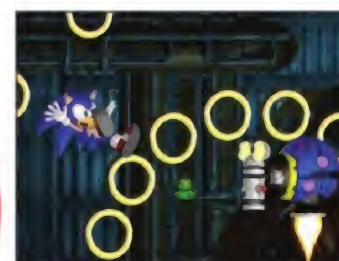
Japanese cover up naughty Playboy pages in Mafia II

THEY SAY: Shocking and perhaps even horrifying news from the Far East where it was revealed that the Japanese release of *Mafia II* has had its *Playboy* centrefolds censored. This is despite being given a Z rating (essentially an 18 under the Japanese classification system). It's even stranger because *Playboy* had its own Japanese publication for a number of years. Anyway, the Japanese don't want adult gamers seeing all the naughty lady-bits for one reason or another. Oh dear.

WE SAY: Censorship, we cry. Outrageous, unfounded and irrational censorship and that's why we're featuring this story. It has nothing to do with the fact that we can use this story as an excuse to print a still of one of those *Playboy* centrefolds from *Mafia II*. What kind of people do you take us for. We're not that cynical or desperate. We have higher standards than that. We believe in the integrity of these pages. That would be cheap and tactless. This is hard-hitting news. Clearly.



STAT ATTACK
82%
of *Mass Effect 2*
players used the
Male Shepard



Hedgehog horror

THEY SAY: Sega has drawn attention to the sorry decline of the hedgehog population by teaming up with the People's Trust for Endangered Species to build a hedgehog crossing in Twickenham, London.

WE SAY: Nothing to do with the release of *Sonic 4* on PSN then? Good for Sega, then.

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Go to www.Play-Mag.co.uk for daily updates and features

Reload

The very best of the Play Blog this month

Top 5 PlayStation HD remakes we'd love to see

<http://bit.ly/1660bf>



5 METAL GEAR SOLID

This was a tough one. It was either going to be the first game or *Metal Gear Solid 3*, but then we thought that game still looks pretty amazing for its age anyway. The first game on the other hand... A second run could give *Metal Gear Solid* another chance in the spotlight with a younger generation of gamers.



4 GRAND THEFT AUTO: VICE CITY

More so than any other *GTA* game, *Vice City* captured the iconography of Eighties cinema and music in one brilliant package. If any *GTA* game is deserving of an HD remake it's this one – it's easily the most interesting entry into the series when it comes to delivering something to look at.



3 FINAL FANTASY VII

Yes, this is probably the most obvious entry. But it's obvious because it's just so right. Fans have mostly been hankering for a complete overhaul of the game, but we'd settle for just a bit of HDalisation. There's just so much beautiful artwork in that game, so much astounding art direction, and such a brilliant story.



2 CASTLEVANIA: SYMPHONY OF THE NIGHT

In the same vein as the recent *Monkey Island* remakes on the PlayStation Network, we'd like to see *Castlevania* remade with exactly the same gameplay and level design, but with all the sprites and environments redone with beautiful hand-drawn textures.



1 OKAMI

The probability of an HD remake of *Okami* is low as the first game didn't sell. The Wii port didn't sell. The upcoming DS game probably won't sell. Despite gamers' desire for beautiful, innovative, different game experiences, they just don't appear willing to part with their cash when it comes to *Okami*. A great pity, because this would make one beautiful HD game. Throw in a bit of HDR lighting, brighter colours, better defined lines... actually, we're going to stop writing this because the thought of it never occurring is making us genuinely upset.

Worst FPS maps ever

<http://bit.ly/1nFUDQ>



3 NUKETOWN (Call Of Duty: Black Ops)

Nuketown is quite possibly one of the most infuriating multiplayer maps that we have ever had the misfortune of playing and there really has never been an arena less suited to Team Deathmatch in *Call Of Duty*. You can spot a bad map from a mile away when you can predict which side is going to win after about 15 seconds and never, ever be wrong.



2 PYRRHUS RISE (Killzone 2)

It's a good idea in theory. A big, open map with three bridges in the middle that serve as the focal area for all that space, driving players to meet in the middle for a frantic shooting spree. Sadly, what works in theory doesn't work in practice. The wide-open spaces gives a huge advantage to snipers, while dying on such a large map then means spawning miles away from the action. Sigh.



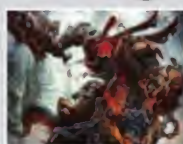
1 RUST (Modern Warfare 2)

Some maps, you just wonder – at what point did this seem like a good idea? Rust's arena is an absolute mess, where random grenade throws will land you random kills, you'll die without ever knowing why and anyone who lucks their way to a decent killstreak will then go on to win the match. A horrible map with the only saving grace being it was impossible for campers to thrive on it.

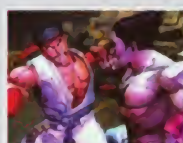


Games you'll be waiting a while for

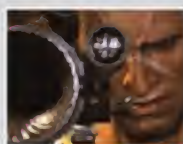
<http://bit.ly/cnb7b>



> **DARKSIDERS 2** THQ recently confirmed that its sequel to this year's dark horse hit shouldn't be expected until its 2012 financial year. That means we may not see it until early 2013. Ouch. Sorry horsemen fans. This one is going to take a while, but after the last game it should be worth it.



> **STREET FIGHTER X TEKKEN** You wouldn't have thought that another fighter based on the *Street Fighter* IV engine would take all that long. However, Yoshinori Ono has said we shouldn't expect his blockbuster fighting franchise crossover until at least 2012.



> **DEVIL'S THIRD** Coming from ex-Team Ninja head Tomonobu Itagaki, *Devil's Third* is a game to watch. He seems to be merging his work with *Ninja Gaiden* and *Dead Or Alive* with the third-person shooter genre and the pay-off promises to be bloody. It won't be here until 2012, though.



> **BIOSHOCK INFINITE** One of the most exciting new titles coming to consoles, the original *BioShock* team is turning its creation on its head by sending it skyward. Irrational is working towards a 2012 release date, though, with the game itself set in 1912, 100 years earlier.



> **AGENT** We're pinning Rockstar's PS3 exclusive *Agent* down for at least a 2012 release. Why? Mainly because Rockstar has other projects much further ahead of the curve such as *L.A. Noire* and *Max Payne 3*. Those could be 2011 releases, so *Agent* may be given some more breathing space.

PlayStation games that haven't aged well



> **DRIVER** It was amazing when it was released. And yet... go back to *Driver* today and it seems disappointing. It's not that the handling is primitive, the pop-up is terrible or the city feels strangely flat. It's that you can't run people over. These days, it should be a standard feature.



> **SILENT HILL 2** "I played it a few days ago and it's really good," said Chris. "But the FMV bits are terrible," we countered, with an explosive statement packed with such wit, insight and infallible logic. Sensing he was reeling, we then followed up with "it's the worst FMV you'll ever see in a game." POW.



> **TEKKEN** It hasn't aged well at all with its blocky characters that look like a child has assembled them using cereal boxes and potato prints, cheesy jingles that would embarrass a Christmas ad and primitive gameplay where anything more than a three-hit combo seemed like voodoo magic.



> **ONIMUSHA: WARLORDS** It's included because now we're used to the likes of *Devil May Cry 4*, no one should hark back to the days of slowly rotating like a sinking oil tanker. The series should come back, though, with controls that have you running in the direction you push on the analogue stick.



> **RESIDENT EVIL** You'll see that infamous opening cut-scene. You'll probably get far enough to hear about Jill sandwiches. But the modern gamer won't stick around. It's too clumsy and rough around the edges to grab attention...

<http://bit.ly/fn4Gr>

5 improvements The Elder Scrolls V could do with



1 VARIED NPC VOICE ACTING We're pretty certain there are only five different voice actors in *Oblivion*. Hopefully the *Elder Scrolls V* will have a few more.

2 A BETTER ENGINE In its day *Oblivion* was one of the best-looking games going. Boot it up today, though, and you'll find a game that looks pretty dated...

3 A FANTASTICAL WORLD *Oblivion*'s take on Tolkien was rather dull but fantasy doesn't need to be boring – just look at *Guild Wars 2*.

4 REAL RADIANT AI Hopefully, a new *Elder Scrolls* will try to realise the Radiant AI system in a more meaningful way than in *Oblivion*.

5 MAINTAIN THE CORE APPEAL OF THE SERIES We've suggested a few changes, but the one thing we really want from a new *Elder Scrolls* is to ensure certain things stay the same.

<http://bit.ly/fn4Gr>

Uncharted 3: five places it definitely will be set* (*it won't)



5 UNCHARTED 3: AMONG GEORDIES Drake finds himself stranded in an inhospitable land without a friendly face to turn to. Nathan Drake has to take on the North East of England.

4 UNCHARTED 3: UNCHARTED IN SPACE No line of sequels would be complete without an iteration going into space. There's no witty hilarity here – Nate just goes into space.

3 UNCHARTED 3: DRAKE'S FORTUNE 500 Drake tires of the treasure hunting business so he embarks on his biggest adventure yet: business school.

2 UNCHARTED 3: THE DARK DRAKE It's grittiness that sells. So we'll see a washed-up, alcoholic Nate have to try to piece his life back together from the broken remains.

1 UNCHARTED 3: DRAKE'S FLAKED HAKE BAKE Naughty Dog, in going for a wider market, has decided to make *Uncharted* into a spin-off of the *Cooking Mama* series.

<http://bit.ly/fn4Gr>

Assassin's Creed: Brotherhood: A masterclass in how to hook your audience

We love *Assassin's Creed: Brotherhood*. In terms of game design it's ingenious, constantly rewarding and enticing the player with new tasks to complete, jobs to undertake, challenges to overcome, high spots to synchronise and even more. It's the product of some great minds coming together and thinking long and hard about contemporary game design, and how it can be bettered. The end result is one big riposte to any who played the original *AC* and said it was too repetitive. *Brotherhood* is the opposite. There's almost too much variety.

Rarely before has a game offered so much to do, so many good ideas, and all without breaking the pace or flow of the game. *Brotherhood* can feel like it's over-inundating the player at times, but if we were to complain that a world as big and beautiful as *Brotherhood*'s rendition of Rome is filled with too much variety, we would be fools indeed. It's one of the best examples of how to develop an open-world game and keep it from feeling slack, and a brilliant example of how to keep your players hooked for ridiculous seven-hour sessions.



<http://bit.ly/hq5tB>

THE ART OF BURNING (RUBBER)

DON'T BE DAUNTED BY GT5'S OPENING HOURS

GRAN TURISMO 5 may be an unfamiliar undertaking for many PS3 owners, new as they are to the series. As such, we've put together a quick beginners' guide for the game, covering some of the elements you need to get acclimatised to life in the almost-real world of *Gran Turismo*. As for those of you who already know what you're doing? Well, it never hurts to brush up on the fundamentals.

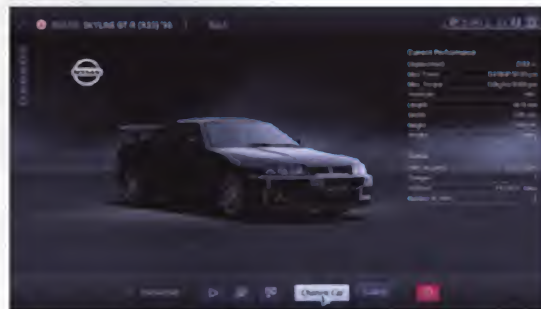


BUYING YOUR FIRST CAR



HONDA CIVIC TYPE R

Well-loved. Ideal for first-time buyer. Won't need many upgrades for first few races, but can last early adopters a while with new parts. 20,000 credits ono.



NISSAN SKYLINE GT-R (R33)

Even more well-loved. Perfect for those with a few wins under their belt. Can be upgraded into a monster. Useful for most of the game. 30,000 credits ono.



DODGE VIPER GTS

Used, but loved. Fancy a step-up to ridiculous rear-wheel sports cars? Course you do. Upgrade this to an uncontrollable bullet of a car. 60,000 credits, no offers.

Or, of course, you could just complete the licence tests to get free cars

MOT: TO THE MAX



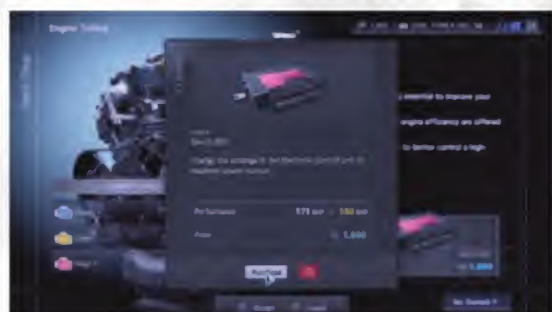
If you're buying a used car, it's likely to have smelly, dirty oil. Now you may not think this is of grand concern, and it isn't, but for the cheapo price of 250 credits you can get an oil change. New oil: better performance. Simple.



Once you've won a few races you can overhaul your engine. This is far more expensive than the oil change (from 5,000 to 20,000 credits early on), but it has a greater effect on your car's performance.



OUT WITH THE OLD (PARTS)



Your first port of call should always be the Sports ECU, under the engine section of the upgrades menu. This 1,000 credit chip will give you a boost of a dozen or so 'horses' under the hood (not literal horses). It's cheap and very effective for the price.



Once you have a win or two under your belt you should opt for a Stage One Weight Reduction. For 5,000 credits you will improve acceleration, braking *and* handling. You're covering three important areas, and with the minimum of expenditure. What more could you want?



Well, you probably want some better tyres to stop you skidding off at every corner. This is where things get a bit pricier, but the 36,000 credits you put into the purchase of a set of Soft Racing Tyres is one of the most important purchases for any car.

TUNING TIME



Individual gear ratio settings may seem a bit complex, but if you stick to automatic settings you can achieve necessary changes easily. Setting gears closer to each other results in quicker acceleration – good for twisty courses – whereas gears further apart means higher top speeds – great for courses with long straights.



Ah, spring rates. In the simplest terms you probably want to set up your suspension as follows: a low spring rate is useful for a turn-heavy course with numerous changes in elevation, while a high rate works better on flatter, straighter tracks. There's more to it than that, but this is the simplified version.



You can no longer buy brakes in *GT5*, but you can still tweak them. You can shift the balance for brakes, increasing it to make stopping distances shorter and vice versa. Understeer can be forced by making the front balance higher than the back, and oversteer can be forced by doing the opposite.



OH, AND THE IMPORTANT BIT... DRIVING



The most basic thing to learn in *GT5* is cornering. Nail it, and you've nailed the game. Approach the bend sticking as wide away from the inside corner as you can. Before you start turning, gradually apply the brakes, before turning across the apex of the bend.



You want every manoeuvre to be as smooth as possible – no jabbing at the gas. As you begin to straighten out, start putting your foot down again. You want to be in a straight line before your foot is to the floor, leaving the turn once again in a wide position.



Just remember these key points and you'll be fine no matter what car you're driving or what corner you're taking: never brake hard during cornering; *do* brake early; try and keep your motions smooth; accelerate out of the corner; *drive in as straight a line as you can*.



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THE 200 GREATEST PLAYSTATION MOMENTS

15 years. 200 issues. Three generations. Four formats. More games than we could possibly count. As **Play** marks its 200th issue it seemed only right that we pay tribute to the wonderful moments our favourite series of games consoles has given us throughout our history. There were far too many to squeeze in here, but nonetheless we present to you 200 of our most treasured PlayStation moments

OPENINGS

200
-191

"ALWAYS BEGIN AT the beginning" may sound like the dim-witted cod philosophy of a college drop-out, but it's something that sticks with us. A strong opening sets the tone and sticks with you for a long, long time. Here are some of the best.



Onimusha 3 (2004)

A long, inspiring, beautiful and epic intro just when we had lost hope of ever being impressed by CG intros again.



Devil May Cry 3 (2005)

This was Dante as we always imagined – effortlessly cool and not a care in the world. A fine reintroduction to the character.



Uncharted 2: Among Thieves (2009)

You're half-dead, you don't know where you are – oh, and you're on a train about to fall off a cliff.



The Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion (2007)

An hour of exploring crypts and sewers, and for what? Why, to be rewarded with *that* view.



Fahrenheit (2005)

You've killed a man, and you're going to get caught unless you do something. What you do is up to you.



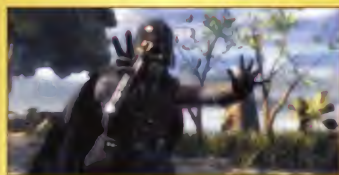
G-Police, (1997)

Seven minutes-plus of rendered intro glory. It may seem trite, but *G-Police* helped set a standard for epic, involving stories to come.



BioShock (2008)

"No Gods Or Kings, Only Man", and all inside one of the most beautiful worlds ever created in a game. Welcome to Rapture.



Star Wars: The Force Unleashed (2008)

A poor game, but the opening level ranks as one of the best power trips ever made.



Soul Blade (1997)

"Transcending history and the world, a tale of soul and swords eternally told... To love! To shine!" Cheesy, brilliant, classic.



Fallout 3 (2008)

Growing up in a vault must have been stifling. We all know this because we too got to grow up in a vault.

PLAY MAGAZINE LAUNCHES

Newsagents (1995)



JUST OVER 15 years ago a videogames magazine believed to be called 'Play Plus' was launched. Nobody realised you weren't supposed to say the 'Plus' bit and so **Play** was born and now celebrating our 200th issue it's hard not to look back on that day as something special.



189. Climbing Damascus Assassin's Creed (2007)

The ability to climb a tower in *Assassin's Creed* just because you can gave us a sense of vertical freedom unlike other sandbox games.

188. WINNAH!

Bishi Bashi Special (2000)

Before WarioWare borrowed the format, *Bishi Bashi Special* was the best place in the world for multiplayer insanity. Ten years on and it's *still* one of the best.



187. Megaton Moment

Fallout 3 (2008)

Save Megaton or blow it up. It's one of the earliest and most challenging decisions you'll get from *Fallout 3* and can define your character.

186. Henshin A Go Go!

Viewtiful Joe (2004)

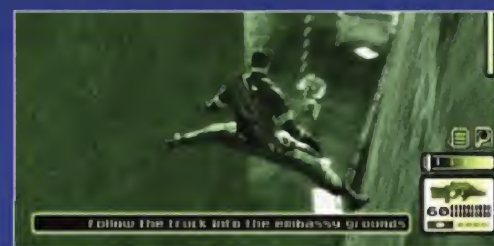
There's very little that beats the thrill of executing a perfectly timed VFX move. Slow it down, speed it up, zoom it in – henshin a go go, baby!



185. From DIRT To Track

Colin McRae Rally (1998)

Even today that sense of driving from a dirt surface to a road surface, when done well, is an amazing feeling and *Colin McRae* did it first.



184. Split The Difference

Splinter Cell (2003)

Sam Fisher may be in Snake's shadow on PlayStation consoles, but his wall split takedown showed us a new form of stealth gaming.

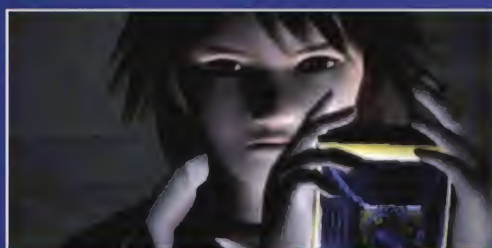


183. The Green Mile
Beyond Good & Evil (2003)
The chase sequence where Jade escapes Alpha Section over the rooftops is as exhilarating today as it was when the game was launched.

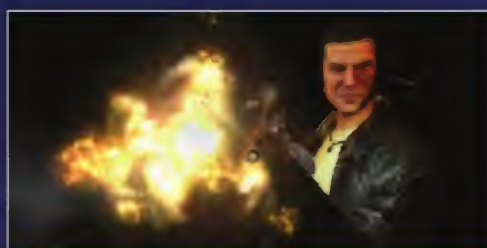
182. Cracking It
Ratchet & Clank: A Crack In Time (2009)
There are other moments in the other games, but the time puzzles on *A Crack In Time* were simply brilliant. Cracking that last one genuinely made us squeak with joy.



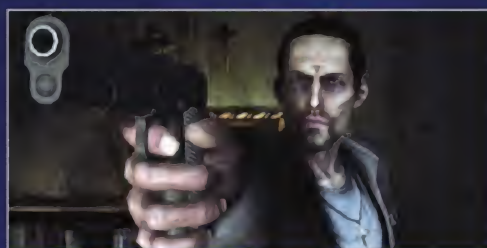
181. Sumo Rolling
We Love Katamari (2006)
Once again on that fine line between genius and insanity, the level in which you roll a sumo over food to make him fatter for his fight was superb.



180. Watch Your Head
Project Zero (2002)
Having spent the whole game with your camera spotting ghosts, the moment it fails you because there's one right above you was chilling.



179. A Bad Dream
Max Payne (2002)
In a perfect mix of gameplay, storytelling and atmosphere, walking through Payne's drug-induced nightmares are very special indeed.



178. Meeting Nathaniel
Heavy Rain (2010)
Did you shoot or hold your nerve? The meeting with Nathaniel was a great piece of tense drama and instinctive behaviour in this masterpiece.



177. This Was A Triumph
Portal (2007)
From start to finish *Portal* was a huge success, but who'd argue that the highlight was GLaDOS's parting song telling us she's Still Alive.

176. A Whole New World
Dark Cloud (2001)
Early demos of this RPG showed us the Georama mode, and we were smitten. The ability to build your own towns was truly next-gen.

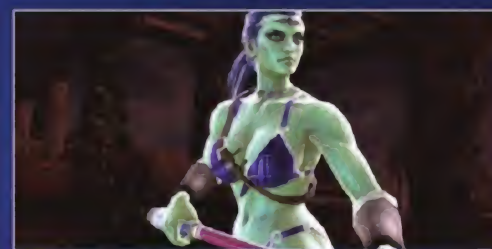


172

KILLING THE FIRST COLOSSUS
Shadow Of The Colossus (2006)
SEEING IT, SCALING it and finally killing it, your first encounter with the Colossi was something extraordinary to behold. Was it going to save your dying love? It was never clear and after it fell, the mystery just ran deeper. All the wonder and drama of the game in a single battle.



171. Combo Chaining
Joe Danger (2010)
Bringing back memories of classic arcade games, chaining an entire combo through a course on *Joe Danger* was a real achievement.



170. Suitably Distracted
Soul Calibur IV (2008)
Finally defeating your online opponent because they were distracted by your green-skinned, big-breasted Amazonian fighter.



169. Home Win
ModNation Racers (2010)
Creating a track and then whipping your friends on it on *ModNation* was a great feeling, made better by the fact you were playing as Elmo.

KRATOS' OPENING BOSS FIGHTS

THE GOD OF War series has brought a lot of amazing moments to PlayStation consoles, but its opening boss battles are among the very best.

175
- 173



The Hydra - God Of War (2005)
For sense of scale, devastation and brutality, this first boss battle is the perfect introduction to what *God Of War* is all about.



The Colossus Of Rhodes - God Of War II (2007)
Topping the original opening, this fight against an animated statue is one of the best boss battles ever.



Poseidon Adventure - God Of War III (2010)
As you ascend Mount Olympus this battle against Poseidon on the back of Gaia is absolutely stunning.

168
- 157

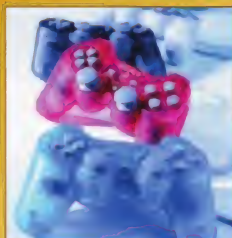
HISTORY'S SIGNIFICANCE

THE HISTORY OF PlayStation covers more than 15 years, and in that time a lot has happened. Here are just some of the most important things...



Sony And Nintendo's Split (1991)

A seemingly innocuous business decision by Nintendo led Sony to launch arguably the greatest line of consoles ever made.



The Dual Shock Is Born (1998)

It certainly wasn't an originator, but it was the first (and still best) controller to have analogue control and rumble built in.



Square Defects From Nintendo (1996)

Once bedfellows with Nintendo, Square defected to the Sony cause for *Final Fantasy VII*. Soon enough, the JRPG was mainstream.



Digital Versatile PS2 (2000)

By making the PS2 a DVD player, Sony introduced the world to a fledgling format, helping to make it standard.



EyeToy (2003)

Essentially giving birth to the casual gaming boom on PS2, the EyeToy and its games, followed quickly by *SingStar*, changed the shape of the games industry forever.



Go Digital (2009)

PSPgo may not have set the world on fire, but Sony's decision to go purely digital distribution was a bold step.



PS3: You Can't Afford It (2006)

When the PS3's features were announced it was a statement of intent: this was a luxury item, and you probably couldn't afford it.



100 Million (2005)

The PS2 has gone on to sell many more, but breaking that 100 million milestone was an epic achievement for Sony.

100,000,000



Free-SN (2006)

The features set may not be as rich as competitors, but opening up the PSN to everyone by making it free was a great thing for Sony to do.



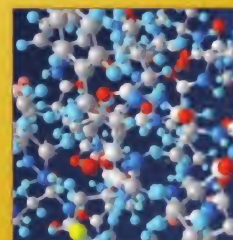
XMB Appears (2003)

It's now standard across Sony platforms, but the first appearance of the XMB wasn't something many saw – on the super-rare PSX.



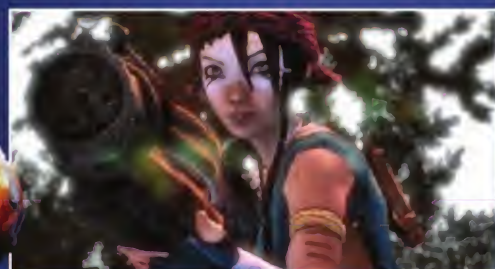
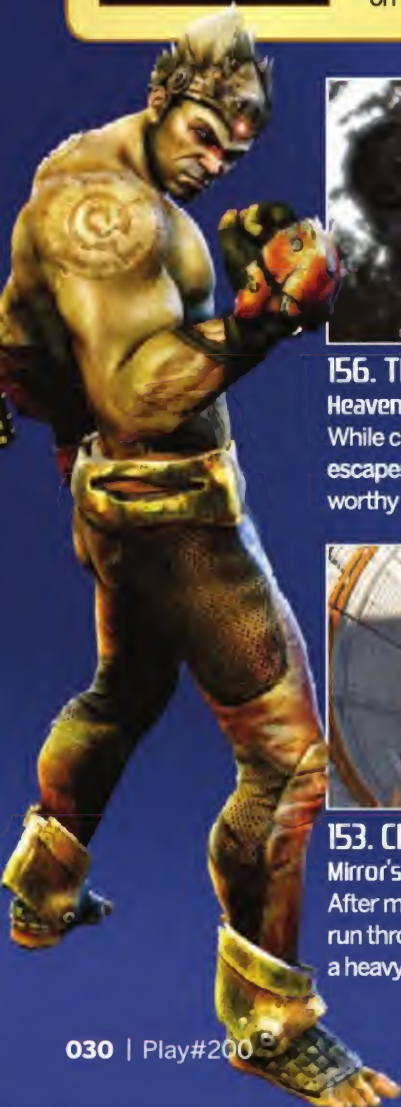
1080p Gaming Begins (2006)

Sony had to make sure the PS3 launched with full-HD gaming on offer. What better way to do it than with *Ridge Racer*?



Folding@Home (2008)

Using the power of your PS3, Folding@Home crunched numbers for Stanford Uni so it could research diseases like Parkinson's and Alzheimer's.



156. The Great Escape Heavenly Sword (2007)

While challenging, managing to save Shen as he escapes from the clutches of King Boham is a worthy task. Plus you get to play as Kai.



155. The Dog Goes Down Enslaved (2010)

After such a superb build-up, finally putting down the Dog mech is a triumphant moment with a great story pay-off for Monkey and Trip.



154. Patient Warrior Bushido Blade (1998)

With single hits being potentially fatal, waiting for your chance to get the perfect kill stroke and executing it was something very special indeed.



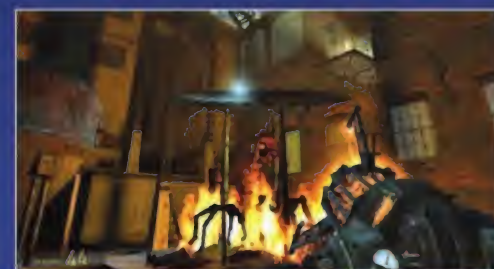
153. Clean Sweep Mirror's Edge (2008)

After much practice, pulling off the perfect clean run through a level without firing a shot or taking a heavy fall is a genuine thrill.



152. A New Generation Jak II (2003)

The way *Jak II* updated the platform genre really showed off what we could expect from Naughty Dog in the future. A seminal moment.



151. We Don't Go To Ravenholm Half-Life 2 (2007)

Working your way through the nightmare of this abandoned city is full of frights, puzzles and terrifying battles against the headcrab zombies.



150. The Long Gui Goodbye
Final Fantasy XIII (2010)
 Bringing down this 16,200,000 HP beast is a task only a few have the skill for, but doing it is one of the greatest *Final Fantasy* achievements.



149. Milkman Madness
Psychonauts (2006)
 Raz's trip into the mind of Boyd Cooper in The Milkman Conspiracy level is one of *Psychonauts'* highlights thanks to its corkscrew village.



148. The Elbow Drop
Prototype (2009)
 Flawed as it may be in some ways it can't be argued that destroying a tank with an elbow drop remains a pretty incredible thing to do.



147. Something To U-Boat About
Uncharted: Drake's Fortune (2007)
 A U-Boat. In the middle of the jungle. Not the kind of thing you expect to see and a crowning moment in establishing the *Uncharted* style.



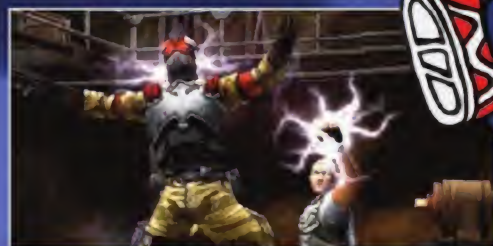
146. Demon Death Seduction
Dragon Age: Origins (2009)
 Kill the Archdemon and you'll die, but impregnate Morrigan and you'll live. You may also father the anti-Christ. An easy decision.



145. Dual Analogue Control
Ape Escape (1999)
 Making D-pads feel like plus-shaped relics, *Ape Escape's* controls were twin analogue sticks only. A ballsy innovation.

144. Being Allowed To Freestyle

PaRappa the Rapper (1998)
 Finally being allowed to freestyle and breaking free of the Simon Says structure meant, naturally, mashing all the buttons while squealing with joy.



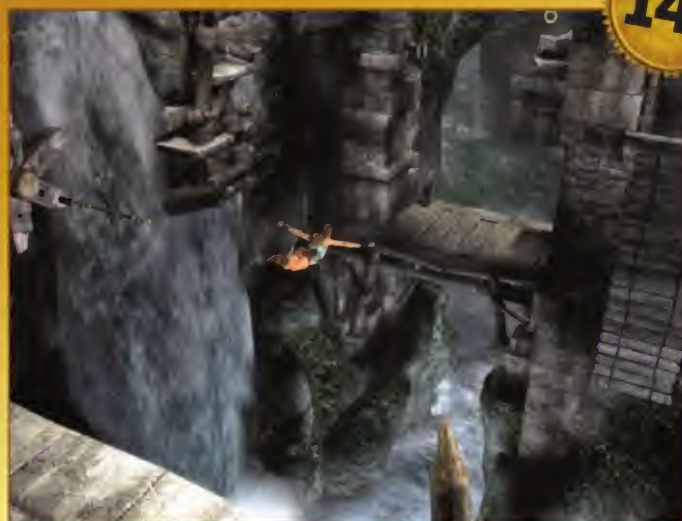
143. You Are Feeling Sleepy ...

Psi-Ops (2004)
 Mind control is an interesting mechanic for any game, allowing as it does the exploration of the human cond... oh, you've walked him off a cliff.



142. Unlocking Dr Boskonovitch

Tekken 3 (1998)
 Elderly scientist Dr Boskonovitch was slow and had a bad back. You almost expected Werther's Originals to spill out his mouth when smacked in the face.



HOLY DIVER

Tomb Raider (1996)

THE SENSE OF wonderment and scale was all too apparent when first playing through *Tomb Raider*. And with that freedom comes the want – the *need* – to just muck about. Find the tallest ledge. Dive off it. Land in water/die. It's still gaming bliss, even to this day.

EVOLUTION OF REALISM

THERE ARE FEW games as meticulously designed as *Gran Turismo*. Exact gear ratios, camber height, the right kind of engine noise – Kazunori Yamauchi is a man obsessed with the finer details. But there's one other feature of the series that's made it one of the most renowned on PlayStation...

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Gran Turismo (1997)

The graphics, of course. The first game, released on PSone in 1997, was stunning. Graphically, this was the best of the best.



Gran Turismo 2 (1999)

Until 1999 came along and GT2 knocked it right out of the park. These replays were more real than anything before.



Gran Turismo 3: A-Spec (2001)

But then along came PS2 and GT3: A-Spec. We didn't think that real could look any more real. But it could.



Gran Turismo 4 (2005)

Okay, Yamauchi. At this point you were being silly. 2005's GT4 was jaw-dropping in both its graphics and depth of content.



Gran Turismo 5 (2009)

GT5 looks more real than real life itself. So real in fact we might be playing it right now and we just don't realise it.

A TWIST OF FATE

WARNING - SPOILER ALERT

Plonk a big old plot twist at the end of a story just for the sake of it and the audience *will* notice, and their reaction will not be kind. Use a plot twist with subtlety and intelligence, however, and they can be a fantastic narrative tool – shocking the audience while shedding new light on everything that's gone before. The PlayStation has seen its fair share of these moments over the years, and it should go without saying *there are spoilers ahead*.

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BioShock (2008)

Would you kindly read this entry? *BioShock's* plot twist is great in that it causes the player to question all of their actions prior to their meeting with Andrew Ryan. Pity the game went a bit pants after it.



Castlevania: Symphony Of The Night (1997)

Completing the game under the right circumstances unlocks a whole new castle – or more accurately, the same one inverted. Talk about turning things on their head!



Braid (1998)

There's nothing worse than finding out that *you're* the bad guy. You spend the whole of *Braid* thinking you're the hero, only to rewind the last level and find you're not saving your princess; you're stalking her.



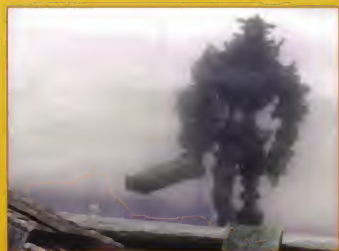
Infamous (2009)

Quite an *infamous* twist, Cole goes up against Kessler several times throughout the game, only to find out that Kessler is... himself. From an alternate future. That's taking identity problems to a whole new level.



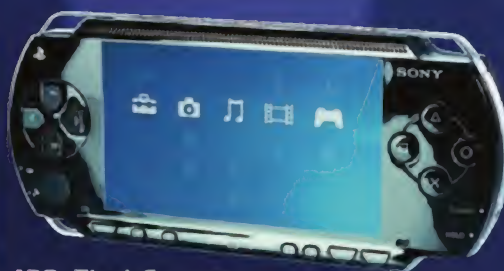
Metal Gear Solid 2: Sons Of Liberty (2001)

What's the best way to keep fans happy? By giving them control of their favourite character in a cool level, then snatching him away and revealing you're actually playing as some nobody.



Shadow Of The Colossus (2005)

Like *Braid*, in that you're the bad guy. Turns out killing beautiful, lonely, non-aggressive creatures is evil. That's why you turn into a shadowy, horned beast at the end. Who'd have thunk it?



129. That Screen

PSP (2005)

After staring at the gorgeous miniature screen in your hands, you'd soon realise why Sony made dribble so easy to wipe off your PSP.



128. Realising It Works

Guitar Hero (2005)

"I'm not playing that!" you'd say. Then, at a party, you'd try it. And secretly love it. And quietly get your own. And loudly curse *Bark At The Moon*.



127. Passing The Training

Driver (1999)

It was mandatory, it was long and it was hard. Has any other game made passing the training as triumphant as passing an actual driving test?



126. Next-Gen FF

Final Fantasy X (2002)

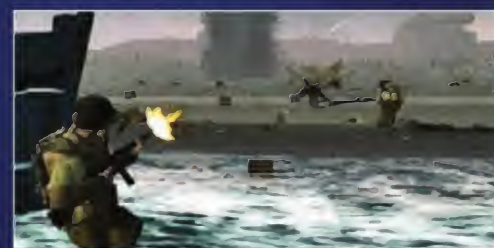
They speak! They laugh! They look amazing! But all these years later, we still don't know if you pronounce Tidus as 'tie-dus' or 'tee-dus'.



125. Why Is It Good?

Crash Team Racing (1999)

How did this end up as a legitimate *Mario Kart* rival? In the midst of a million terrible kart clones, having one that was good shocked us all.



124. Beach Landing

Medal of Honor: Frontline (2002)

If you want to know why every *COD* opens with an explosive beginning, look back to the drama and thrills of *Frontline's* beach landing.



123. Poisoning Guard With Rice Ball

Tenchu (1998)

If a rice ball landed in front of you, would you eat it? You shouldn't. Not because it's unhygienic. It just leads to you being stealth killed.



122. Licensed Game Is Good

Die Hard Trilogy (1996)

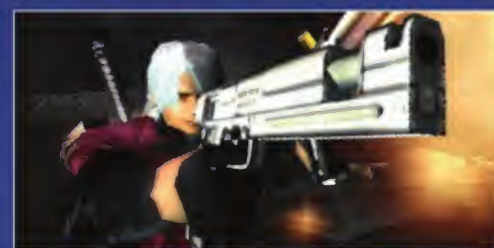
Not one good licensed game but... three?! Suspecting voodoo magic, we threw it in the river to see if it floated. It didn't.



121. Venice

Tomb Raider 2 (1997)

Nothing like whizzing through Venice on a speedboat, then getting stuck against a wall and wondering if speedboats can reverse.



120. Juggling Enemies With Guns

Devil May Cry (2001)

It was a moment that once performed, you wanted to do over and over – swiping an enemy into the air and keeping them there with gunfire.



BECOMING AN ADDICT

SOME GAMES SIMPLY become a compulsion. You can't fight your need to play them more and more. Sometimes it can make very little sense why, such as with these games...

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Grand Theft Autolog
Need For Speed: Hot Pursuit (2010)

Some of the most addictive gaming we've had in ages due to the updates about mates beating our times.



They See Us Rolling
Katamari Damacy (2004)

If you got this game on import it wouldn't have taken long to get the rolling bug and play for hours.



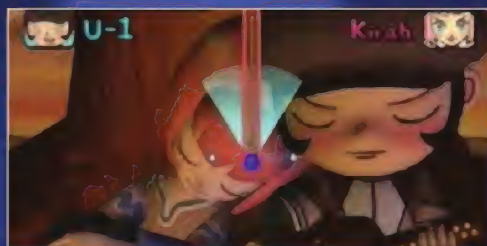
Ode To Joy
Peggle (2009)

After that music kicks in for the first time you can basically kiss your life goodbye. You now belong to Peggle.



116. First Takedown
Burnout 3 (2004)

Compared to the pedestrian glass-and-bent-metal of its predecessor, the explosions for Burnout 3 takedowns were insanely satisfying.



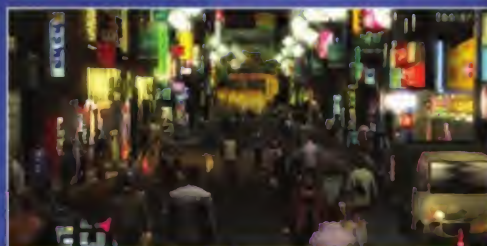
113. Legendary Theme
Gitaroo Man (2001)

Gaming's equivalent of a power ballad, as it's emotional (the ballad part) and needed to set up for a boss battle (the power part).



115. Murder Of Crows
Hitman: Blood Money (2006)

If shuffling through the Mardi Gras crowds wasn't fun enough, Agent 47 puts on a chicken suit and becomes as deadly as salmonella.



112. Stepping Out Into Tokyo
Yakuza (2006)

Sega's take on Tokyo in Shenmue provided the next best thing from the hustle and bustle of people to wasting time buying bento boxes.

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PALACE OF PAIN
Killzone 2 (2009)

THE APPROACH TO Visari's Palace is a visual treat. With Visari nuking his own city you approach with debris all over the place, flags fluttering in the wind and smoke billowing everywhere. This is the finest showcase of Killzone 2's amazing visuals.



111. Mastering The Mix
DJ Hero (2009)

Or... when you finally learn how to bring the slider back into the middle instead of slamming it around like a sausage-fingered wedding DJ.

110. Halt! Hammerzeit
Red Faction: Guerrilla (2009)

If you have seen a giant building. If you have taken your hammer to it. If you have brought it crashing down. Then you have enjoyed Red Faction: Guerrilla and truly lived.

VERY GHILLY

Call Of Duty 4 (2007)

It's still one of the highlights of the entire series, but playing All Ghillied Up, the flashback level from the first Modern Warfare, was an amazing experience.

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THE GRANDEST OF THE GRAND

GRAND THEFT AUTO didn't just change the PlayStation, it changed the world. Whether it was shifting gamers' expectations of the medium to a far higher standard or inciting controversies that would reach from the tabloid papers all the way to Parliament, *GTA* started tremors that will still be felt for a very, very long time both inside the games industry and in the world at large.

Chatterbox - Grand Theft Auto: Vice City (2002)



Vice City has one of the best soundtracks ever, but it was Chatterbox FM that really made the mark with its biting, political satire. A real first in a videogame.

I Can Do What Now? - Grand Theft Auto (1997)



When the original *GTA* came out the idea that we could steal a car and drive it *wherever we wanted* felt like nothing less than the future of gaming.

Grander Theft Auto - Grand Theft Auto III (2001)



Liberty City rendered in 3D was a revelation, altering gamers' expectations of world design and forever changing the course of the games industry.

A New Perspective - Grand Theft Auto IV (2008)



Seeing Four Leaf Clover from Luis Lopez's perspective, for example, made Liberty City feel more connected and real than ever before.

Heat, The Videogame - Grand Theft Auto (2008)

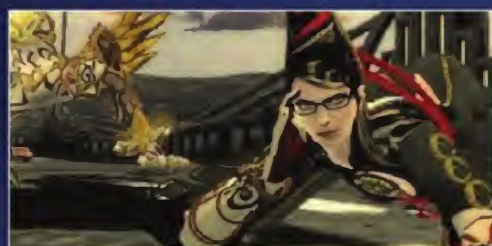


GTA brought gaming closer to cinema than ever before. Take Four Leaf Clover, for instance. A top mission that recalled *Heat* and *Reservoir Dogs*.

A Brilliant Novella - Grand Theft Auto: Liberty City Stories (2005)



A mere four years after the release of *GTA III* and we were already exploring Liberty City in the palms of our hands in *Liberty City Stories*.



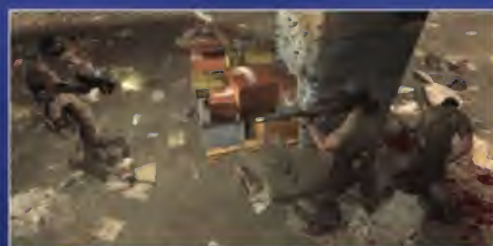
102. Breakdance Combo Finisher Bayonetta (2009)

She spins around, shooting pistols from her feet, before coming to a stop on the ground and posing. All games should end combos like this.



100. Shooting Leaf Point Blank (1998)

Among its shoot-the-screen lunacy, came some calm as you had to shoot a falling leaf. Hence calm being shattered by your swearing.



99. Swear Button

50 Cent: *Blood On The Sand* (2009)
Any game that has a swear button has to be respected. Any game that gives you points for swearing has to be feared.



98. Hakan's Buttocks

Super Street Fighter IV (2009)
The moment where he spins around on top of his opponent, clenches them between his legs and seems to squeeze them out of his buttocks.

97. Reporting To GIRL

Noby Noby Boy (2009)

It's pretty much the only real goal in *Noby Noby Boy*, yet its cutesy meandering is more satisfying and fun than the linear rollercoasters of many other titles.



96. Russian Base In Co-op TimeSplitters 2 (2002)

Co-op games are a dime a dozen these days but *TimeSplitters 2* showed off true co-op potential for the first time in its Russian base level.



95. Using The AC-130 Online Modern Warfare 2 (2009)

Watch as those who tormented you with Commando become little white ants, scurrying for their lives as you rain death from above.

94. Stage One Music LocoRoco (2006)

As bouncy and joyful as the music was, it was the garbled lyrics in the fictional language that really made the soundtrack sing. Abolish languages now!

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IF I COULD TURN BACK TIME

Prince Of Persia: The Sands Of Time (2003)

THE POOR PRINCE. He battled his way through a palace filled with evil creatures and won the love of a beautiful woman, only to have her forget it all when he rewinds time to save her life at the game's end. That's almost as bad as someone deleting this entire magazine just before it goes to print. The Prince's story is only *slightly* more heartbreaking.



DO THE LOCOMOTION

Uncharted 2: Among Thieves (2009)

ATTEMPTING TO WORK his way up this train is nearly the death of Nathan Drake. We know this before we even begin because we've already seen the result. That only adds weight to what is one of the most perfectly paced and balanced action game levels in recent memory.



93. Balamb Garden

Final Fantasy VIII (1999)

If our school looked like this and students dressed this cool, we'd have paid more attention. Maybe. Well actually, probably not. But still!

92. Puzzling For The Masses

Super Puzzle Fighter II Turbo (1997)

It's tough imagining Ryu and friends outside of beat-'em-ups, so it was a surprise when they emerged in a puzzle game, a bigger one still when it turned out to be decent.



91. Monkey Business

God Hand (2006)

Yes, in *God Hand* you fight a lucha libre-esque gorilla that arrives on a bus. If you doubt its place on this list there's something wrong with you.



90. Sky On Fire

Red Dead Redemption (2010)

Moseying along the edge of a cliff and watching the sun go down, casting long shadows and painting the sky a fierce red, is simply beautiful.



88. Beautiful Chaos

MotorStorm (2006)

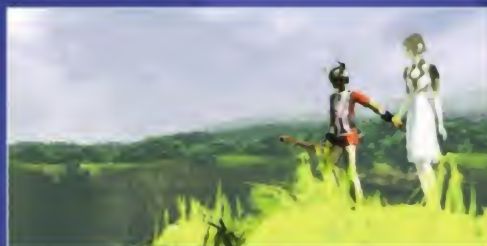
Everyone scoffed when the first trailer for *MotorStorm* was released. "It'll never look this good!" they claimed. But it did.



86. Raining Death

Mercenaries 2: World In Flames (2008)

There's nothing more satisfying than overkill. Like getting the Nuclear Bunker Buster in *Mercenaries 2*, then using it on a single guard.



87. Love You I Do

Ico (2001)

The way she holds your hand; your bond with Yorda is unspoken, but remains one of the strongest in all of gaming.



85. Designer Gaming

Wipeout (1995)

Having The Designers Republic create art and licence cool electronica acts made gaming cool for a club-going, music-buying audience.

METAL GEAR SOLID HIGHLIGHTS

WHILE SNAKE WASN'T born on the PlayStation and he may have strayed from time to time, there is no question that this is his home.

84-79



Some Kind Of Psycho

Metal Gear Solid (1998)

Switching controller ports to fight Psycho Mantis was a moment of gameplay genius.



Cheating On ZOE

Zone Of The Enders (2001)

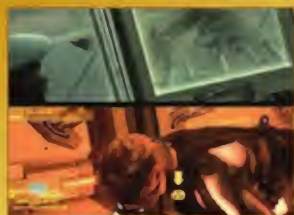
Buying ZOE just so we could play the MGS 2 demo? Yeah, we pretty much all did that one.



This Is The End

Metal Gear Solid 3: Snake Eater (2005)

Kill him in a wheelchair and come back later to find him dead.



Corridor Of Death

Metal Gear Solid 4: Guns Of The Patriots (2009)

Dragging a dying Snake through a microwaved hall is one of the tensest scenes in gaming.



Building Metal Gear ZEKE

Metal Gear Solid: Peace Walker (2010)

In a historic moment, you get to build your own Metal Gear.



A Strepsil Snake?

MGS Series (1998 - Present)

SNAKE saying 'Metal Gear' is special. David Hayter's voice makes Snake a special hero.

THE GREATEST DEATHS

DEATH IS A natural part of life and these characters had some of the most memorable deaths in PS history.

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Aeris Is Killed
Final Fantasy VII (1997)

The moment when grown men found they could cry over a videogame.



Sergeant Jackson Faces His Doom

Call of Duty 4: Modern Warfare (2007)
Jackson saves a downed pilot and is caught in the blast of a nuclear bomb.



The Waynes Die Again
Batman: Arkham Asylum (2009)

Poisoned by Scarecrow's nerve gas, Batman must relive the deaths of his mother and father, Thomas and Martha Wayne.



Hale's Final Hour
Resistance 2 (2008)

Finally consumed by the Chimera virus he had been fighting, Nathan Hale is killed by Joe Capelli as an act of mercy.



The Beheading Of Isaac Clarke

Dead Space (2008)
Taken by surprise as a Necromorph leaps at him, Isaac loses his head. Literally.



Jenny Takes The Hit
The Darkness (2007)

You're forced to watch Jackie Estacado's girlfriend Jenny get killed as the Darkness stops him from saving her.



The Church Killing
Grand Theft Auto IV (2008)

By deciding to either kill or deal with Dmitri, you unwittingly decide whether Roman or Kate dies at Roman's wedding.



A Father Dies
Half-Life 2: Episode 2 (2007)

"Close your eyes honey," Eli Vance tells his daughter Alyx as she and Gordon Freeman look on while a Visitor kills him.



SNAKE Sheds A Tear
MGS 3: Snake Eater (2004)

Despite learning about The Boss and her plans, you must kill her to complete her plan and elevate Naked Snake to Big Boss.



Death Of A Bandicoot
Crash Bandicoot (1996)

The many deaths of Crash Bandicoot were always a joy, if only for being so funny. Failure turned into joy in one moment.



68. Gaming Blossoms
Flower (2009)

Flower's unique take on gaming took us all by surprise. Bringing life back to the city in the final level was not just enjoyable, but beautiful, too.



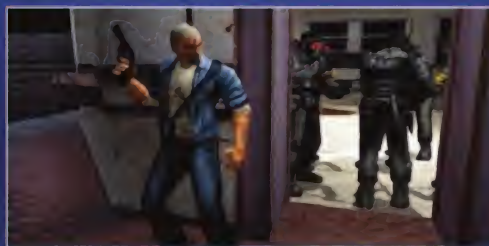
67. Power Slide
Vanquish (2010)

There's little more satisfying than launching yourself across a level, before launching into a somersault and killing your enemy in slo-mo.



66. Celestial Calligraphy
Okami (2006)

Putting brush to parchment for the first time, and causing a tree to blossom into wonderful colour, was a beautiful experience.



65. Video Nasty
Manhunt (2003)

Whether its repeatedly stabbing someone in the face or busting their head open, our first brutal kill on Manhunt always felt like the worst.



64. Crystal Clear
Wipeout HD (2008)

1080p, 60fps, Dolby Digital 5.1 – this was the way anti-gravity racing was meant to be. In 2008, it was a tantalising glimpse of the future.



63. Fasten Your Seatbelts
Split/Second: Velocity (2010)

We thought we'd seen it all in racing games, that was until we saw a jetliner crash into the tarmac mere inches from our car on Split/Second.



62. The Beeline
PixelJunk Monsters (2007)

If you set up your defences right, and wait for the right moment, you can take out those irksome bees in PixelJunk Monsters with one laser shot.



61. What Up, G?

Monster Hunter Freedom Unite (2008)
Upon beating what we thought was the final boss, we attained G Rank, only to find that there's another even deeper game waiting.



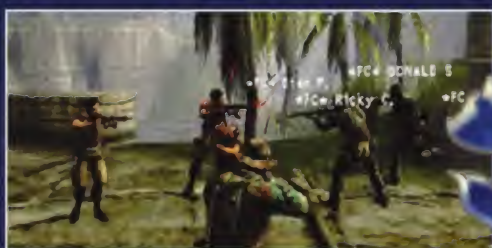
60. A Dimension Of Pure Evil?
Castlevania: Lords Of Shadow (2010)

Past 3D Castlevania games taught us to be cautious, so we booted up Lords Of Shadow ready for disappointment, but it actually worked.



59. Love Is All You Need
The Beatles: Rock Band (2009)

This is how you make a band-focused rhythm-action game. Meticulously crafted and absolutely beautiful to listen to.



58. Playing Together

SOCOM: US Navy Seals (2002)

With *Black Ops* it's easy to forget how revolutionary a feature online play felt in the past. Playing *SOCOM* online was a revelation.



57. These Wonderful Toys

Borderlands (2009)

Millions of guns, you say? We bet there's not much worth-OH MY GOD. That shotgun fires rockets? Things just got interesting.



56. Going Postal

Hitman 2: Silent Assassin (2002)

Sneaking into the villa disguised as a postman was a brilliant moment that showcased how complex AI and game design was becoming.

55. Art attack

3D Dot Game Heroes (2010)

When this came into the office, Ian's created character was his head. Any game allowing you to do this is alright in our book.

54. Disnenix

Kingdom Hearts (2002)

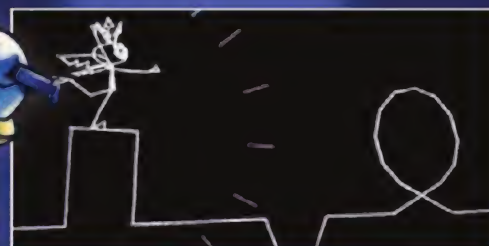
A game that featured both Cloud Strife and Donald Duck sounded like the worst idea ever, but somehow it works wonderfully. An unexpectedly great pairing of IP.



53. Ultimate Destruction

Black (2006)

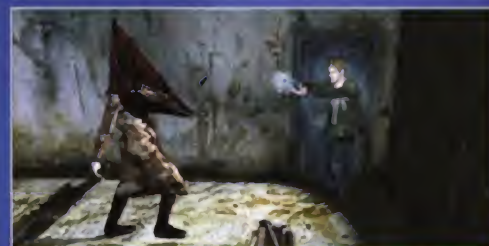
It's extremely hard to believe that *Black* was on PS2 – even now it looks like it could be a next-gen game.



52. Mixtape

Vib-Ribbon (1999)

Following on from *PaRappa The Rapper*, *Vib-Ribbon* allowed you to use your own music CDs to generate unique levels.



51. Terror Incarnate

Silent Hill 2 (2001)

Pyramid Head is quite easily one of the most memorable, and frightening, videogame characters we've ever seen.



47. G-Whiz

Time Crisis (1997)

If *Ridge Racer* proved that the arcade game could work in the living room, *Time Crisis* cemented that fact.

THE LIZARD

Heavy Rain (2010)

WITH FIVE MINUTES to cut off Ethan Mars's finger, you don't have much time to absorb what's happening. Panic sets in, so did you see the utensils you could have used?

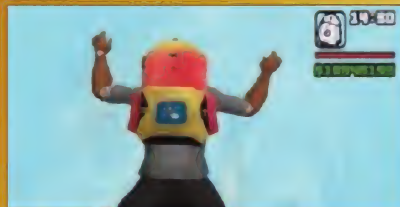
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FREE AS A BIRD

THE PLAYSTATION POPULARISED many fine features in the world of gaming. Open worlds; the play, create, share philosophy; casual gaming – but, almost as important, it introduced us to jumping out of planes for a laugh.



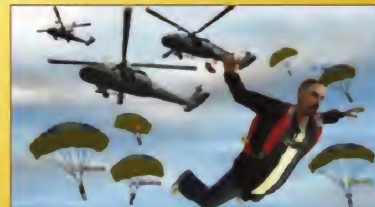
Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas (2004)

It all started in *San Andreas*. There was nothing more fun than watching the city spread out below as you floated down above it.



Just Cause 2 (2010)

A revolutionary moment? Get it? Never mind. What better way to enjoy *Just Cause 2*'s sumptuous graphics than to see them as you sail down from above?



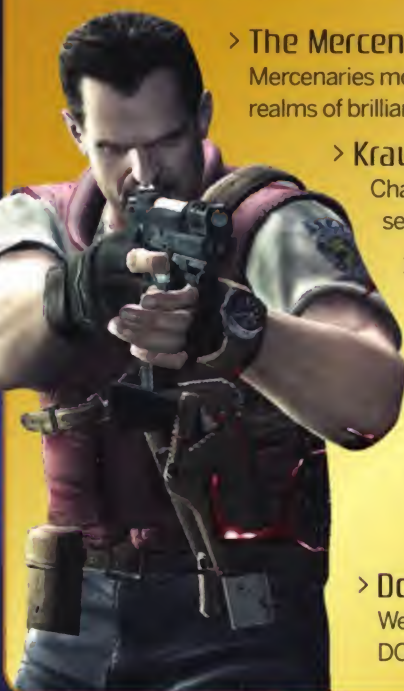
Grand Theft Auto IV: The Ballad Of Gay Tony (2009)

Parachuting returned in *The Ballad Of Gay Tony*. Skydiving and base jumping is often funnier when you don't open the parachute...

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RESIDENT HIGHLIGHTS

THE SERIES HAS spread its wings to other consoles and through countless spin-offs, but in our hearts *Resident Evil* has always been – and will always be – a PlayStation series. That's 14 years of love right there, kids.



> The Mercenaries - Resident Evil 5 (2009)

Mercenaries mode has been great fun since *Resi 3*, but number five took it a step further into the realms of brilliance.

> Krauser Knife Fight - Resident Evil 4 (2005)

Channelling all of our *Commando* and *Under Siege* fantasies into one wonderful QTE sequence was the highlight of the best game in the series.

> Barry Burton (1996 onwards)

"Hope this is not... CHRIS'S blood."

"Jill, here's a lockpick. It might be handy if YOU – the master of unlocking – take it with you."

"You were almost a Jill sandwich!"

"Whoa! This hall is DANGEROUS!"

> Two Scenarios, One Game - Resident Evil 2 (1998)

We still wonder why this hasn't been repeated – two sides of the same story, for both characters. *Resi 2* was four games in one.

> Dogs. Windows. Terror - Resident Evil (1996)

We'd already met a zombie so were ready for anything when thHOLY CRAP THOSE DOGS JUST JUMPED THROUGH THE WINDOW!

40. Move Over, Keith Moon

Rock Band (2007)

We remember fighting over who would play the drums when *Rock Band* came out. They were the ultimate peripheral.



39. Hoth Stuff

Star Wars: Battlefront (2004)

Many games have attempted to re-create the Battle of Hoth from *Empire Strikes Back*, but Pandemic did it best.



38. America, F**K YEAH!

Freedom Fighters (2003)

Defeat the commies, raise Old Glory. It's a classic formula for defeating one's enemies, especially when it's done with tongue in cheek.



37. Head For Heights

Twisted Metal 2 (1997)

Nothing has ever been as cruel or satisfying as Mr Slam picking up a foe, holding them over the edge of a skyscraper and dropping them.



CARDINAL SIN

Assassin's Creed II (2009)

WHEN SOMEONE TOLD us the final boss was the Pope in *Assassin's Creed II* we didn't believe them. Then we played and by jove, we only punched the head of the Catholic Church... in the head. It may seem bizarre but it all gets explained and you couldn't ask for a more satisfying battle. Plus you get to see all the aftermath in *Assassin's Creed: Brotherhood*. Punching the Pope has its consequences.

36



35. SSXy

SSX 3 (2003)

Doing a backflip off a huge ramp and hearing the music fade out, before kicking back in when you land was so cool.



34. Fear Is The Mind Killer

Rez (2001)

Adam F's thumping *Mind Killer* provided the soundscape to a level that mixed the organic with the inorganic. Absolutely inspired.



33. Flippin' Heck

Destruction Derby 2 (1997)

The moment when many people realised the new generation of racing games had arrived: everyone remembers their first flip or barrel roll.



32. Flame On!

Syphon Filter (1999)

Law enforcement handbooks don't tell you to do it, but admit it – you laughed the first time you tazered someone until they set on fire.



31. Follow The Leader

Oddworld: Abe's Oddysee (1997)

GameSpeak was a minor revelation – commanding your allies, having conversations with them and farting. Amazing.



30. RIIIIIIIDGE RACERRRRR!

Ridge Racer (1995)

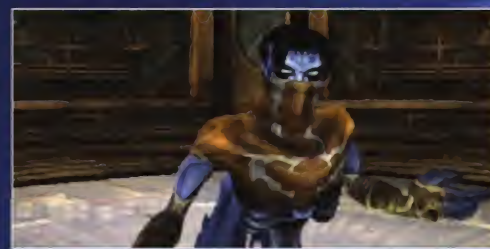
Previous consoles had strived to be arcade perfect. The PlayStation – via *Ridge Racer* – showed us it never had to strive.



27. Tradition, Schmadrition

Final Fantasy XII (2007)

A bold step for the *FF* series took it away from the traditional fare we had become used to, and reinvented the RPG wheel.



24. Dreaming Of Streaming

Legacy Of Kain: Soul Reaver (1999)

Soul Reaver's shining achievement was popularising disc-streaming tech. Loading times for large games? Forget about it.



29. Mad Men

Double Life (advert) (1999)

"And conquered worlds..." Do you remember when PlayStation ads in Europe were good? There's never been a better gaming advert.



26. CATAclysm

Syndicate Wars (1997)

An open world with fully destructible buildings, vehicles and people. What could make this better? Why, a nuclear hand grenade, of course.

23. Story Of A Lifetime(s)

Blood Omen: Legacy Of Kain (1997)

Choice is a big issue in modern gaming, but it was more cut and dried with Kain and co. Good? Wrong. Bad? Canonical and correct.

22. Beautiful Beast

Killzone 2 (2009)

Impossible. Guerrilla will never be able to make a game look as amazing as that pre-rendered sequence. Games consoles can't be capable of such things. Oh... wait...



28. Capit-al Off

Colony Wars (1997)

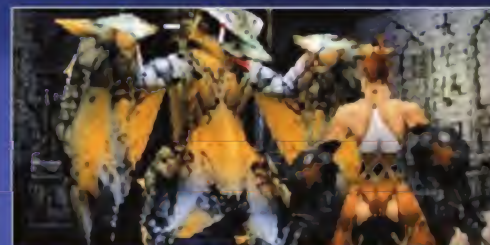
The sense of awe when your fighter was forced to take on a 4km-long Colonial Super Titan ship... it's never been bettered on PlayStation.



25. Lest We Forget

X-Com: Enemy Unknown (1995)

You could put hours into developing your troops on *X-Com*, turning them from nothings into soldiers. This meant it *hurt* when they died.



21. Re-release, Don't Fade Away

Vagrant Story (2000/2009)

Classic titles often faded away into obscurity. *Vagrant Story's* re-release on PSN signalled a paradigm shift for gaming as we know it.

THE SPORTS CENTRE

SOME OF US will never be great athletes, but sporting games give us some of the joy and excitement of taking part in professional sporting competition and these titles excelled at that.

20-14



The Invincible Vieri

Pro Evolution Soccer 4 (2004)

Christian Vieri was the best striker on *PES 4* and his goal-scoring prowess made him a joy to play with.



Get In The Hole

Everybody's Golf: World Tour (2008)

Getting your first hole in one on *Everybody's Golf* somehow had an extra level of magic above other golf games.



Flick To Victory

Skate (2007)

Mastering the Flick-It controls and executing the perfect line in *Skate* made real skateboarding cool again.



The King Is Dead

FIFA 09 (2008)

That moment playing *FIFA 09* when you realised EA had finally perfected the formula was special to us all.



900 To One

Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2 (2000)

Pulling off a 900-degree spin made Tony Hawk a hero among skaters, so doing it in *Pro Skater 2* was very special.



Sweaty Haymakers

Fight Night Round 3 (2006)

Seeing the amazing graphics and animation of *Fight Night* on the PlayStation 3 was superb.



Music And Video

WWF SmackDown (2000)

Experiencing the full force of the WWF's music and video entrances was a first on the PlayStation and a highlight since.

TECHNICALLY IMPRESSIVE

THERE'S NOTHING LIKE a good tech demo to set the gaming glands into overdrive. As gamers we're naturally excited about the future and what the onset of new technologies means for the evolution of interactive entertainment. Even if it's just a bunch of rubber ducks bouncing around in a bathtub, the potential therein will be enough to get any real gamer salivating at the thought of what's to come.



The Emotion Engine

Heavy Rain (2006)

Beautiful, moving, emotive; The Casting was a breathtaking glimpse into a future where games were about real drama and the human condition.



Dino-mite

PlayStation (1994)

Even today, in a world of hi-res textures and advanced animation systems, the PlayStation T-Rex tech demo remains impressive.



Old Man, New Tricks

PlayStation 2 (1999)

The old man demo presented gamers with realistic features for the first time. It was the precursor to Heavy Rain's facial animations.

13-11

KRATOS + VIOLENCE = FUN

God Of War series (2005 - present)

KRATOS is an angry young man, but that's good, because it means these things happen as a result.



10



PLAYED, CREATED, SHARED

LittleBigPlanet (2008)

CREATING AND SHARING your first level on LBP was always meant to be a special moment. Having poured your creativity into your little Sackboy adventure it was a piece of cake then sharing it with the entire globe and getting lots of handy feedback on it. What a wondrous LittleBigPlanet we live on.

9



8. On Their Own Turf

Doom (1995)

Doom, a PC legend, came to PlayStation. It brought better sound and lighting effects, making the PSone version arguably superior.



7. He's A Geyser

Vandal Hearts (1997)

What does everyone remember about Konami's great, turn-based SRPG? Probably the gushes of blood erupting from defeated enemies.

6. Get Off My Land

Demon's Souls (2010)

The feeling of true fear is something you have only really experienced when a Black Phantom invades your game. Squeaky bum time.



5. More Than Meets The Eye MkI

Future Cop: LAPD (1998)

Transformers games have never managed to nail it but Future Cop did: you press a button, you transform into something different. Brilliant.



4. Do A Barrel Roll

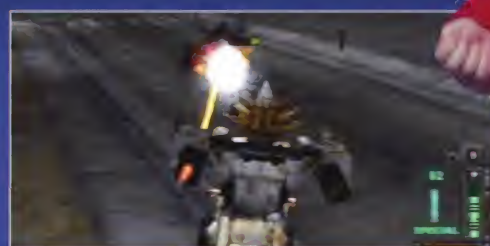
Ace Combat 2 (1997)

"Enemy on your six! Missile launched! Evade!" Whoosh! Kablam! Zwoosh! We had never, ever felt as Top Gun as we did in Ace Combat 2.

3. Gabe The Naughty Schoolboy

Electronic Entertainment Expo (2010)

Valve was at the forefront of developers decrying the PS3. Gabe Newell's appearance at E3, supporting PS3, changed all that.



2. More Than Meets The Eye MkII

Twisted Metal: Black (2001)

Sweet Tooth's ice cream van was iconic. Throw in 'transforming into a killer robot' and you've got a 99 we have no interest in buying.





THE LAUNCH OF THE PLAYSTATION

Sony Computer Entertainment (1994-1995)

THE MOMENT WITHOUT which none of the other 199 moments featured here would mean anything to anybody, the launch of the PlayStation changed everything. As mentioned previously it all came out of a joint project between Sony and Nintendo that Nintendo turned its back on; a decision that it may have regretted over the last 15 years. Sony launched the PlayStation in Japan in 1994 and followed it up in North America and Europe the following year, and in doing so changed the gaming landscape forever.

The PlayStation was cool. It started appearing in nightclubs as well as in people's living rooms. Games like *WipEout* gave it music credibility, *Tomb Raider* gave it icon status and titles like *Metal Gear Solid* and *Resident Evil* gave it the kind of mature gaming that simply didn't exist on consoles before. But it was all thanks to the machine itself and how Sony fought for it.

Between 1993 and the global launches, Sony worked tirelessly to bring publishing partners to the format. Namco Bandai and EA were two notable early adopters who found Sony's support for third-party developers to be highly attractive. Later Eidos, Square and Konami would join their ranks to give the PlayStation a line-up of games that no other console could match and an air of cool that no game machine had ever had before.

Everything else since can be traced back to this incredible console.

BIG 200 GIVEAWAY

WORTH
OVER
£5,000

Play is 200! We're celebrating in style, thanks to Greggs' special offer on sausage rolls and Tesco Value Cola that we picked up during our lunch break. Ain't no party like a PS Club party, as the saying goes. So we're giving away our biggest collection of goodies to date to really make this an occasion. All you have to do is email play@imagine-publishing.co.uk with the appropriate subject header for the relevant competition and the right answer. Good luck...

▲ **Subject header:**
Red-ray Player

Question: When was the name Blu-ray Disc officially announced by Sony?

- A) 1972
- B) 2002
- C) 2009

▲ **Subject header:**
What's The Time Mr Wolf?

Question: What is the key component for watches to run on time?

- A) Quartz
- B) Petrol
- C) Soil

▲ **Subject header:**
Just Gimme The Final Fantasy Stuff

Question: Which of the following is a Final Fantasy XIII character?

- A) Hail
- B) Lightning
- C) Drizzly Rain

▼ **Subject header:**
Read Is Good

Question: Dante's Inferno was originally a poem by who?

- A) EA
- B) Dante
- C) Inferno

▲ **Subject header:**
Let Off Some Stream

Question: When was Commando originally released?

- A) 1975
- B) 1985
- C) 1995

▲ **Subject header:**
Plug Me In

Question: Which is a type of electrical cable?

- A) Coaxial cable
- B) Cable car
- C) Vince Cable

► **Subject header:**
Paul Phoenix Is Cheap

Question: What was the name of gaming's worst EVER BOSS in Tekken 5?

- A) The Final Form
- B) Jun Kazama
- C) Jinpachi

► **Subject header:**
Ooh Look How Fat It Is

Question: Where was PlayStation 3 first released?

- A) Japan
- B) Australia
- C) Scotland

► **Subject header:** It's Not Contagious

Question: What's the name of the city where *Dead Rising 2* is set?

- A) Big City
- B) Sin City
- C) Fortune City



◄ **Subject header:** Ass Creed

Question: What is the name of the main assassin?

- A) Ezio
- B) Enrique
- C) Eduardo



▼ **Subject header:** Ooh Look How Slim It Is

Question: When was the PS3 Slim released?

- A) September 2009
- B) January 2010
- C) November 2010



▲ **Subject header:** Moving Pictures

Question: What does CRT stand for?

- A) Cathode Ray Tube
- B) Country Radio Transmissions
- C) Clear Rectangle Television

▲ **Subject header:** There Was A Third One?!

Question: Which of the following starred in *Starship Troopers 3*?

- A) Jolene Blalock
- B) Jim Carrey
- C) Dame Helen Mirren



▲ **Subject header:** Let The Games Begin

Question: Which of the following was a PlayStation 3 launch title?

- A) Heavy Rain
- B) FIFA 11
- C) Resistance: Fall Of Man



▲ **Subject header:** Pretend Fight Club

Question: How old is Undertaker in real life?

- A) 21
- B) 45
- C) 72



▲ **Subject header:** What's Wrong With A Pad?

Question: Who is the main producer of the *Gran Turismo* series?

- A) Kazunori Yamauchi
- B) Warren Spector
- C) Peter Molyneux



▲ **Subject header:** Shaddapa You Face

Question: Where did the Mafia originate?

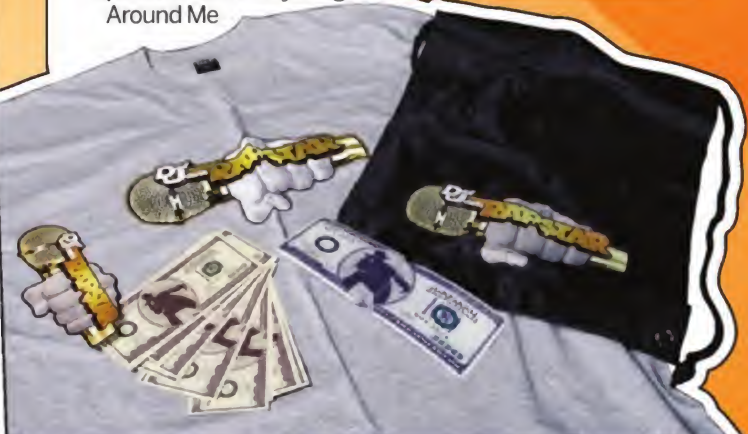
- A) Sicily
- B) South London
- C) Finland



▼ **Subject header:** I Got 5 On It

Question: What does Wu-Tang Clan's C.R.E.A.M. stand for?

- A) Can't Respect Edward After Monday
- B) Cricket Really Excites All Men
- C) Cash Rules Everything Around Me



Terms And Conditions

To submit your answer, simply email play@imagine-publishing.co.uk with the relevant subject line plus your name and address. The closing date for entries is 19 January 2011. Please be aware that answers must be submitted to the above email address only and any left through the comments section of our website will be automatically disqualified.

This competition is open to residents of the United Kingdom and Ireland. Imagine Publishing has the right to substitute the prize for a similar item of equal or higher value. Employees of Imagine Publishing (including freelancers), their relatives, and any agents are not eligible to enter. The editor's decision is final, and no correspondence will be entered into. Prizes cannot be exchanged for cash. Full terms and conditions are available upon request.

From time to time, Imagine Publishing or its agents may send you related material or special offers. If you do not want to receive this, please state so clearly on your competition entry.

11 IN

Publisher Sony Developer Guerrilla Games Release Date February

KILLZONE 3

Forget Codblops, the PS3's got Kill... zlops

That standfirst is terrible.

Okay, wiseguy. This isn't about the standfirst. It's about one of the most important shooters coming to PlayStation 3 in 2011.

Fine. What's so important about it?

Have you played the multiplayer beta? We have. A lot. Too much, probably. For starters, it remains one of the most visually impressive games we've ever seen despite the fact we're playing it online. For seconders, Guerrilla Games has

addressed all of the problems fans had with the first game, retuning the character progression system and delivering a much more intense shooter experience.

Okay, so what's different about the progression system then? Do you turn into a cyborg shark after reaching level 10?

What? No. There are no sharks in *Killzone*. Certainly no cyborg ones. What's wrong with you? Let's be sensible ➤



STAR OF THE SHOW

In *Killzone 3* your actions won't go unrecognised

OUT OF THE three multiplayer modes available in *Killzone 3*'s beta, Operations feels the most different. Like *Bad Company*'s Rush there's an attacking and a defending team, with each either having to complete or prevent the completion of a series of objectives. The twist here is that every time an objective is completed or failed the top three players in each team feature in a short cut-scene. Sure, it's gimmicky, but there's something incredibly satisfying about watching your character model – with your PSN ID floating above its head – do something incredibly cool while everyone else is watching.

2011

THE GAMES WE'RE GETTING EXCITED ABOUT IN THE COMING YEAR

> here. The class system has been shaken up a bit, with the Soldier and Assault classes thankfully dropped, which means no more rocket or grenade spam. The remaining classes are the Engineer, Marksman, Infiltrator, Tactician and Field Medic, all of which are unlocked from the start. Players are now awarded points for performance, which can be used to unlock weapons and abilities for each of the five classes.

Is it going to be like *Killzone 2*? Where you could rank up to a level 12 General in about 15 minutes?

15 minutes is a *bit* of an exaggeration, but no. There will be 45 levels to climb in *Killzone 3*, and plenty of perks to unlock as you do so.

It all sounds a lot like *Call Of Duty* to me.

Well of course it does. Almost every online game does these days; even racers have unlockable perks. Infinity Ward created a great system in *COD*'s multiplayer. Why shouldn't other games borrow it if it feels so good?

Okay. Point made. Continue.

Where were we? Oh yes. Weapons are now part of the class levelling system, meaning you'll need to save unlock points to afford the more powerful weaponry. There's a choice of six weapons for each class, three primary and three secondary, as well as six secondary abilities that include powers such as enhanced cloak upgrades for the Marksman, more powerful turrets for the Engineer, or the ability to call in a Sentry Drone for the Tactician.

Blah blah turret upgrades blah. Tell me something cool.

Ah, okay. How about jetpacks?

They're not overpowered,

they have just enough juice to give players a short boost into the air. On vertically stacked levels like Turbine Concourse it can really change the pace and flow of the game. That cool enough for you?

It's okay, I guess...

Well what about *mechs*? Yeah, you like that, don't you? The bipedal, robotic suits are extremely empowering, and used effectively can change the tide of a battle. Careful, though. A good Marksman with a steady aim can shoot the pilot right out of his seat.

Okay, that is pretty cool. What else do I need to know?

Well, the maps are much bigger here, sharing more in common with *Killzone 2*'s Pyrrhus Rise than Radec Academy. They're cleverly designed, too – Frozen Dam, for instance, surrounds its huge open playground with a complex rabbit warren of gantries and corridors. It's a great map for those tense one-on-ones as well as finding crafty sniping positions. There are some interesting interactive elements, too – Corinth Highway has a small receiver near one of its tactical positions that can be used to call down a mortar strike on the enemy, while Turbine Concourse has a *huge* EMP generator in the centre that disables all electronics every few minutes.

But there's definitely, definitely no cyborg sharks?

For the last time, no.

But will the finished game at least be better than your standfirst?

We certainly hope so.

11 IN 2011

Publisher Warner Bros. Developer Rocksteady Studios Release Date Q4 2011

BATMAN: ARKHAM CITY

Part bat; all man

There's a medical centre! There's the Monarch Theatre! The bad guys don't wash their clothes! That's the fresh information we can learn from these *Batman: Arkham City* screens, which confirms what we already know (ziplines, new takedowns, a section of Arkham City being sealed off) rather than teaching us something new. Come on now, we're not detectives, after all. That's Batman's job.

The story is this. Quincy Sharp has ridden to the Mayor seat of Gotham by taking credit for Joker's defeat following the conclusion of *Arkham Asylum*. With said asylum in ruins and nowhere to house the criminally insane, Sharp decides to buy out a chunk of the Gotham slums and seal off the inmates there, with the borders of this new Arkham City patrolled by private military contractors. Batman keeps a distant eye on this new 'city' until he gets sucked into it, thanks to a plot by Two-Face to execute Catwoman to gain notoriety in this new, mad society. Just as well really. It would be a boring game if all Batman did was watch from the sidelines and grumble about the noise they were making.

Arkham City is also going to be dark. Really dark. We don't mean Rocksteady's hand accidentally slipped on the

brightness dial during development and now they can't remember where it is but rather, dark in terms of tone. Joker is licking his wounds after *Arkham Asylum*'s conclusion and it will be the last time voice actor Mark Hamill takes up the role, so expect even more outrageous ranting from the mad-haired criminal (Joker we mean, not Hamill).

With Calendar Man, Hugo Strange, Victor Tsasz, Talia al Ghul and Mr Freeze involved alongside Two-Face and Joker, the ingredients are there for an explosive confrontation and one of the best games of 2011. That much, you don't have to be a detective to work out.





11 IN 2011

Publisher Bethesda
Developer id Software
Release Date September

RAGE

Where's your anger?

The game's title summed up how most people felt when the release date was revealed, as coffee was spat over monitors and keyboards were rattled to the tune of angry forum posts. This is id we're talking about, though. It takes ages so its games look sexy and play sexier. September will prove that.

Publisher Capcom Developer Ninja Theory
Release Date TBC

DmC

LOLEMO LAME
LOLOLOL

Speaking of anger, *Devil May Cry* fans are still seething following the unveiling of *DmC*, thanks to the new look Dante and news that Ninja Theory would develop it. It's fortunate that Ninja Theory's *Enslaved* arrived when it did, proving it to be up to the task. *DmC* is definitely next year's most intriguing title.





11 IN 2011

Publisher Square Enix
Developer Crystal Dynamics Release Date TBC

TOMB RAIDER

Exploring the possibilities

The newest *Tomb Raider* game – called *Tomb Raider* – needs to take stock of the situation with the series. It needs to make sure to pay attention to the mistakes and successes of the past in order to really flourish and offer gamers something that isn't merely a throwaway addition to Lara's adventures. The brand-new image on this very page gives us clues, but it tells us nothing definitive. Has Crystal Dynamics let us down so far? It has not. It's yet to give us a truly brilliant game on PS2, PS3 or PSP, but it has given us a wodge of goodness – surely this can only bode well for the next instalment? With this knowledge to hand, let's weigh up what we've liked about the series in the past against what we want to see go the way of all the endangered species Ms Croft shot in the face.

The most recent entry in the lineage, *Lara Croft And The Guardian Of Light*, threw in some interesting aspects. Granted, it wasn't a *Tomb Raider* game, but the chance to shoot mythical creatures in co-op (again) is a chance we wouldn't turn down. It would be a stretch to assume the whole game would be based around a co-operative mechanic, but we wouldn't be surprised to see at least the option to play some levels alongside mates/mortal enemies.

Lara is clearly younger this time around, and her inexperience will hopefully be reflected in how the game plays. Crystal Dynamics is being cagey with details, but we have been promised we'll see things never before seen in a *Tomb Raider* game.

Underworld was a step away from linearity, towards a more 'open world' game – something we'll call 'open world' – and we're hopeful that's how *Tomb Raider* will end up. Who is a better character to drop into one of these open worlds than Lara Croft? She's a globe-trotting explorer, for the love of Thor, so it would be a real missed trick to keep things enclosed.

With each new iteration Crystal Dynamics has built a better experience. With that in mind, we find it hard to see it really dropping the ball, and with the renewed interest behind Lara Croft as a character – post *Guardian Of Light* – as well as a plentiful development time, we might just see the developer step up to the big time with *Tomb Raider*.

11 IN 2011



Publisher Sony Developer Insomniac Games Release Date TBC

RESISTANCE 3

Time for humanity's last stand

Of all the things that have gone into making *Resistance 3* one of the most exciting and potentially award-winning FPS games of 2011, time is probably the most significant. You see Insomniac has proven time and time again that it can release high quality, polished products in quick succession, but what it's rarely had is time to spend on a game working on small details really digging deep into what *Resistance* is all about. So far the results speak for themselves.

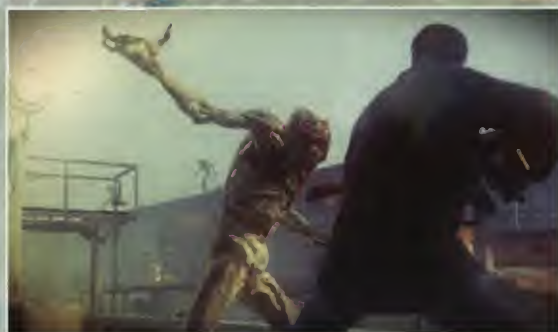
Resistance 3 is shaping up to be a really ingenious twist on the series as the spotlight moves away from military matters to a smaller, less-organised fight against the Chimera. That means scaling down from the larger-scale activities of the last two games and offering a smaller world that packs just as much punch. It was often a complaint of the previous games that you turned up just as everyone lay dead. Well, everyone died off a while back now, but Insomniac will still be looking to put you in the peak of the battle, not at its decline.

And to make sure every part of the game is working properly the team is doing the only thing that can guarantee quality: playing it to death. By all accounts Insomniac has weekly play test sessions within the studio playing every facet of the game and testing it to its absolute limits. It has also been bringing in

outside testers with no knowledge of the series so that it can get a fresh perspective on what it's creating.

The blow by blow gameplay will likely feel quite different anyway thanks to the setting and the way events in the world of *Resistance* have changed the standing of both humanity and the Chimera. For instance, makeshift and sometimes even homemade weapons will be in abundance among the humans. Your AI partners are also likely to be a little unreliable as most of them will be without military training of any kind. Then there's the Chimera who have been cooling the planet to suit their needs and have been introducing more of their own technology.

And between these two extremes will be human-made weapons that adapt Chimeran advancements such as a gun called the Mutator. This interesting new weapon infects targets with a virus that will immediately start creating internal and external blisters until the target explodes and in turn infects those close by. It's a nasty-sounding weapon that could well become a fan's favourite. We are feeling more and more confident that that's true of *Resistance 3* as a whole, too.



11 IN 2011

Publisher 2K Games Developer Gearbox Software Release Date TBC

DUKE NUKEM FOREVER

Still no time to play with himself

So it turns out that *Duke Nukem Forever* wasn't actually a quest for perfection, as we were led to believe. No, according to George Broussard, designer of the Duke, the huge delays the game experienced, stopping it from being released, was simply because "it was just never ready". That's far less dramatic than we hoped for, so instead we're just going to continue believing that it was actually a quest for perfection that turned a hotly anticipated PC sequel into a laughing stock.

But we're not laughing any more. The joke wore thin years ago, we'd given up hope, we were glad to see it finally given the burial it deserved but then the magician himself Randy Pitchford, and Gearbox Software, came in to bring back hope. That's the story we all know by now, though – how does the game actually play? Pretty well, actually. It's quite clearly a game of many stops, starts, rebirths and new beginnings, but it's also a game that still works.

Different elements we've seen include the

field goal metagame we talked of last issue, but also see things like vehicles and the wide array of Definitely Duke weaponry on show. Duke's own personal monster truck makes up the fairly short driving section and, well – it works well enough. As for the weapons, you'll see ones you recognise from *Duke Nukem 3D* (if you're of the age to have actually played it) as well as a few new ones, though this time around – in a nod to the fact it wasn't all developed 13 years ago – Duke can only carry two guns at any time.

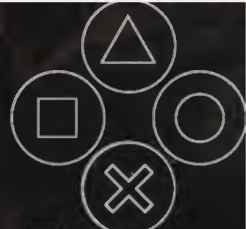
It's brash, testosterone-fuelled and wilfully stupid. It's also something we've wanted to see back in games for a while now, bored as we are with modern day protagonists who we're supposed to believe are actually 'deep' and 'emotional'. Bring back the bloke who kills hundreds of aliens solely because they're trying to steal our babes... and lives.

Old fashioned the game may be and a throwback to simpler times Duke himself may be, but at least it's something different. Though obviously all of that goodwill will be retracted if the game finally sees release and turns out to be a bit pump.

NOTE: we're aware these images aren't new, but when you've got 13 years to choose from, you might as well go for the classics.



11 IN 2011



Publisher Sony Developer Team Ico Release Date Q4 2011

THE LAST GUARDIAN

Giant bird-rat: ho!

Our expectations for *The Last Guardian* are getting out of control. This problem isn't helped by trailers showing us the HD remasterings of *Ico* and *Shadow Of The Colossus*, reminding us what was so wonderful

about Team Ico's previous games. We feel we need to calm down. But how can we when it just looks like it's set to be another great game?

Fumito Ueda, heading up the dev team on *The Last Guardian*, recently revealed a few points about the game – just a few more things to add to the pile

of excitement we've already built up. Among the nuggets was the fact the development has been slowed down so Team Ico can really make things as polished as possible, and so the storyline can be as well produced as we would hope. Though we do think we could do without an 'Agro moment' this time, as our hearts still haven't recovered from that. Ueda has stated that he hopes to create a convincing illusion for players to get lost in and evoke an emotional response from them. We're worried we might actually cry this time.

As for the game itself, we're still a bit in the dark. We do know the boy, controlled by the player, does not have direct control over the cat-bird-thing. He influences and the creature behaves according to its mood and surroundings. It certainly sounds like an interesting mechanic.

Ueda did mention Team Ico has interest in implementing 3D and/or Move controls for the game, but we haven't heard anything backing this up. Hopefully when the time comes, whether it's in 3D/with Move controls or not, the game will be as great as we want it to be.

Publisher Ubisoft Developer Ubisoft Paris Release Date TBC

GHOST RECON: FUTURE SOLDIER

Like normal soldiers, but in the future

Delayed into an unspecified time in that oh-so-tangible time frame of 'fiscal 2012', we're not sure what to think of how *Ghost Recon: Future Soldier* is ending up. On one hand it's undeniable that more development time for the game will see a more polished, likely better finished product. Then, on the other hand, a delay of this size could prove to be an unintentionally public statement on the lack of quality being shown by the game.

We have our doubts regarding the latter point, though. Ubisoft Paris had a hand in creating some of the better points of the series' history, handling single-player development of *Advanced Warfighter*. It's easy to write that particular title off with our modern day hats on, but back when it came out it brought some genuinely innovative

elements to the third-person shooter genre. So long as the developer keeps on bringing the new to *Future Soldier* we know there'll be something worth shouting about when the game finally gets released.

What we've seen of *Future Soldier* so far did have us excited, but there's no denying the effect delays can have on a person's expectations. One delay, okay. Two? That's pushing it. Three, though? Well that's the point where we think it's reasonable to air our doubts. We hope these doubts are unfounded, as there is a gaping hole in the current gaming line-up that a tactical, squad-based shooter would fit nicely. We're not going to write it off just yet – we're just approaching it with more caution than we were before.

11 IN 2011



Publisher Sony Developer Media Molecule Release Date January

LITTLEBIGPLANET 2

Time heals all wounds

As disappointed as we felt about the delay of *LBP 2*, we understood. Having seen this game several times, talked in depth with Media Molecule about what it wanted to achieve and spent hours tinkering with the tools in the beta test, we know the ambition of this project. It was never going to be a quick and easy sequel. Thankfully Sony and Media Molecule had the sense to give themselves a little breathing space to get things right.

One particular stumbling block was MM's creation of a game that got better and better at creating things. Alex Evans told us how the creation of the music sequencer had turned the game on its head once the team realised its broader applications. At that time it had already begun remaking all of its story cut-scenes using the sequencer as it was a more efficient way of plotting speech, camera angles and effects. Basically, *LBP 2* started getting so many amazing new features that it became better than even Media Molecule was prepared for.

So, more time was needed to make sure the story mode worked, the cut-scenes were better

than ever and that you could still make all of these things yourselves. Ultimately, that's what the story mode of *LBP* is supposed to be about – inspiring you to create amazing worlds of your own. With the potential of these tools even outstripping the ability of MM to keep up, it's hard to see where that potential will end.

And then there was the beta, which was sure to have thrown up some new challenges that hadn't been dealt with before. That's what a beta test is all about. No point having one if

you're not looking to test for problems. Having said that we wouldn't have been able to find much at fault with that build of the game. We didn't see much of the single-player, but the creation tools and community features all seemed to be in place.

So while we were disappointed to see it slip we're confident it was for the right reasons. A couple more months of development time could make a huge difference. It's going to be a great thing to behold.





DiRT 3

Still no car wash in sight

It's a tricky series for sequels, as it needs to keep the fan base onboard while feeling fresh enough to bring new fans in. *DiRT* did half the job with purists left happy. *DiRT 2* did the other half of the job, as it was outlandish enough to convince non-converts to give it a chance. Can *DiRT 3* manage to keep everyone happy? Thanks to gymkhana, it might just do that...



RE:PLAY



This month we get all depressed about the eternal doom of the human condition... but at least Sony's releasing some fancy HD remakes



This month's letters answered by:
Chris McMahon
'A challenger appears'

I feel incredibly humbled, and honoured, that the first time the responsibility of the letters page has fallen upon me also happens to be the 200th issue of *Play*. What a momentous moment for me to grasp the bull by the horns and deliver the most brilliant, the most awe-inspiring, the most spine-tinglingly fantastic letters page you've ever seen. It will make you laugh, it will make you cry, and some of it may even make you sneeze. Strap yourselves in and prepare for the most epic two pages of letters you're ever going to read... during the next five minutes.

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War, war never changes

I have to say that your review of *Fallout: New Vegas* was quite a one-sided view of the whole game. You said it was a step to the side in comparison to *Fallout 3*. I couldn't disagree more. It underlined the timeless phrase, "War, war never changes". Wandering the wastes of post-apocalyptic Nevada I saw men hung on crucifixes. I went to the Legion's fort and heard people cry out in agony, the crack of the whip on their backs in the scorching midday sun. I saw child soldiers, something that happens today and is still occurring 268 years in the future. I wondered how it had all come to this. This 'game' had made me think hard. *Fallout: New Vegas* may have seemed a lighter game, but scratch beneath the surface and it's just as gritty a game as *Fallout 3*, maybe more.
Eammon Cullen, Dungannon

Yes, you've made the star letter, but don't get cocky. We respect that you didn't quite agree with our review, but the only reason you're getting star letter is because we had the same thought as you when playing. While wandering the Mojave Wasteland we saw nothing but violence – the Boomers want to blow everyone up; the Fiends want to kill anything that moves; the Legion wants everyone submissive to Caesar's will. We couldn't help but think – will humanity ever learn? Even after a nuclear war



The Mojave Wasteland... it's just not a very nice place to be.

the vestiges of human life are killing one another. Are we destined to repeat the same mistakes? Will we ever stop fighting? *Sigh*, we're depressed now...

Move aside, Minty

After school (and *all* of my homework) I always sit down and play PS3 with my friends. It all started one and a half years ago, when my friend Jack Mowat was talking to me about *LittleBigPlanet* and telling me how it was the best game ever made. So when I got home I looked up *LittleBigPlanet* on my computer and I was stunned. It was so innovative and looked utterly amazing, so after three long months of saving I splashed out £250 so I could get myself a PS3 for Christmas. I got a PS3, *LittleBigPlanet*,

Uncharted 2, *Resistance 2* and some others. I now have many more games than that and my PS3 is my second most prized possession after my cat Minty.

Callum Dickson, Glasgow

Why are you buying yourself Christmas presents? Christmas wouldn't be half as fun if we all sat alone under a tree giving presents to ourselves – "Hey, Chris, this is for you!" "Why thank you, Chris, how thoughtful!" "No worries, Chris, I knew exactly what you wanted," "Well

of course you did"... As for your love of PS3, that's one sentiment we definitely share, and with *Killzone 3*, *LA Noire*, *LittleBigPlanet 2*, *inFamous 2* and a whole lot more coming out in the future, we would wager that Minty the cat will soon be relegated to second place.

High score

I was at work the other day and I could not get the boss theme tune from *Sonic The Hedgehog 2* out of my head. This got



me thinking. I can name only a few games that have a truly memorable tune – games like *Sonic*, *Super Mario World*, *R-Type*, Ryu's stage in *Street Fighter II* – nowadays it's actual songs or some techno or guitar in the background. Don't get me wrong; *Tiger Woods* on PS2 introduced me to Boy Sets Fire, so thanks EA for that. But overall the music in modern games is forgettable pap. Do you think most modern games lack a decent soundtrack?

Paul Jones, via email

Do they lack a catchy soundtrack? Sure. A decent soundtrack? No, not at all. In fact, music in games is arguably getting better – it's no longer irritating, bleepy and repetitive. It's epic orchestras, lingering strings, pounding drums. Consider *Red Dead Redemption's* OST – a collection of



Is videogame music better or worse than ten years ago? With soundtracks like *Red Dead's*, we're going with the former.



Write in, and win! Every full-length letter we print receives a free game, courtesy of EA. For each letter we included this month, the sender wins a copy of The Sly Collection, which is out now on PS3 (£29.99). Age verification is required.

✖ STUPID letter



We're not having withdrawal symptoms from MW2 because we're busy playing Black Ops. Like everyone else.

Christmas spirit

"Hello, my name is Marc, and it has been five days since I last played Modern Warfare 2'... My PS3 has yellow-lighted and I NEED to play Modern Warfare 2. I don't want a Call Of Duty Players Anonymous keyring, so if you have an old PS3 laying around, help an addict out. Think of it as an early Christmas present to a complete stranger.

Marc Chapman, via email

As we're a bunch of absolute Scrooges here at Play, we're going to say no. No you may not have any of our old PS3s. And while we're at it, why are you playing Modern Warfare 2? Do you not realise Black Ops is out and it's better? Here's our Christmas gift to you; it's a piece of advice. Buy Black Ops. And get a haircut. Bah humbug.

eclectic and obscure instruments paired with the bombast of a full orchestra. Or Oblivion – where glimpsing at the stars is accompanied with elegant violins and cellos. Scores are no longer as catchy as they used to be, but that's because the games they give texture to have evolved. You couldn't have Ezio Auditore da Firenze liberating Rome while 8-bit bleeps and bloops provided the soundscape. That would just be pants.

The high-definition life

I have recently heard rumours of a Splinter Cell and Mortal Kombat Arcade collection for PS3. Personally I think that these remastered PS2 collections are a great move by Sony. I got the God Of War Collection and absolutely

F.Y.I.

I'm stuck between Vanquish, Sports Champions, Black Ops and Assassin's Creed: Brotherhood.

Jack, Glasgow

We suggest covering yourself in butter and attempting to squeeze yourself out. Once you're free, play Assassin's Creed: Brotherhood.

A big thank you to all who make Play magazine what it is: a pioneer in everything PlayStation related. Your dedication to deliver makes my life that much sweeter when I rip the plastic off and hungrily read everything between the pages.

Bradley, via email

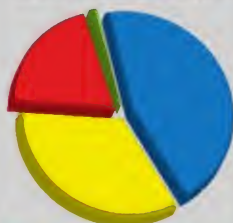
Our suggestion: eat a sandwich before you start reading. Perhaps something like a ham and pickle. That way you won't be so hungry when you read. Also: thanks for reading. The mag wouldn't exist without its readers.

I find it very difficult to actually find any information regarding the game industry, like what aid there is to help me on this chosen career path.

Jake, via email

We suggest giving that thing they call the internet a go, particularly gamecareerguide.com.

THIS MONTH, YOU'VE BEEN TALKING ABOUT...



How great Play is 45%
How great Black Ops is 34%
How depressing Fallout is 20%
Minty the cat 1%

PLAY
GOPLAY
the forum...



The official Play and GoPlay magazine forum
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FAQ Search Memberlist Usergroups
Profile You have no new messages Log out [Tim]

Choice topics from the Play forum.
Join the discussion at www.play-mag.co.uk

SUBJECT: PLAY MAGAZINE DISCUSSION

Topic: New member of the play team???

Hmmmm *sniffs*... I guess you will do.
supermarioex

SUBJECT: GENERAL GAMING

Topic: I337 sp33k

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Gamerphobe

SUBJECT: HEADLINES

Topic: COD: Black Ops

I meant wtf. My friend (who isn't rich) got the Hardened Edition and was all like 'I got extra maps'. Well I got £40, dumbass.
Equinox1.0

The Prince Of Persia Collection is a great way to relive the Prince's past adventures.



loved it. They are great value, and I think that if Sony releases more HD classics it will make the PS3 the best console available. I've read that The Sly Collection has PlayStation Move integration for some parts of the game. This is another smart idea by Sony, although personally I can't see Move revolutionising gaming as we know it.

Kieron Jannusch, Australia

First, a letter all the way from Australia! Wow! That's commitment. You'll be happy to know that a copy of The Sly Collection is winging its way to you right now. We're big fans of the HD collections, too. It's a great way to enjoy games of times gone by – to relive the days of our youth (which have long since passed us by). We just hope Sony doesn't go mad with the concept and start releasing unnecessary titles. No one needs Backyard Wrestling 2: There Goes The Neighbourhood HD.

The BURNING issues

The stuff we want to hear about!



- 1 Is Fallout the most depressing game of all time, or can you think of worse?
- 2 PlayStation Move... can it revolutionise gaming, or is it just another fad?
- 3 Should Play magazine give out consoles for free? Actually... don't answer that one.

*Please be aware, Re:Play competition prizes may be subject to change.

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PREVIEW

The games that will shape the future of PlayStation



● The game's earlier interrogations aren't too tough, but later suspects won't give out information so readily.

RELEASE DATE: Q2 2011

L.A. Noire Everything is suspect...everyone is for sale...and nothing is what it seems



For Rockstar, success comes as standard. Whether it's the open-world carnage of *GTA*; the cinematic storytelling of *Max Payne*; or the expansive nature of *Red Dead Redemption*, Rockstar has tapped into the mind-set of the hardcore gamer. It knows what we want, and it knows how to deliver it. What makes *L.A. Noire* so interesting, then, is that for once Rockstar's success doesn't feel so assured.

Developed by Australian studio Team Bondi, *L.A. Noire* might be set in an eight-square-mile chunk of open world, but gamers who go in expecting the pace and mayhem of *GTA* will be disappointed indeed. No, this is a game about logic and intelligence. You certainly won't find yourself beating prostitutes to death with baseball bats. It's a game that demands inquisitiveness of its players; that requires an enquiring mind; that – if you will – takes a certain animal cunning, lad.

Put simply, it's not the kind of experience that Rockstar's audience is accustomed to. Nor gamers of any variety, for that matter. Because while players will engage in plenty of shooting, brawling and driving, a lot of what *L.A. Noire* does hasn't been seen in a videogame before.

But let's start from the beginning. The setting is Los Angeles, 1947. Hollywood's just entering its golden age – the town intoxicated by the glitz and glamour of the movie business – but under that glossy veneer is a dark and seedy underworld, filled with corruption, deceit and murder. If you've ever read a James Ellroy novel you'll know the kind of degeneracy we're talking about here – it makes *Grand Theft Auto IV* look like a trip to *In The Night Garden* with Igglepiggle.

Into this world steps Cole Phelps, a decorated World War II veteran and a newly minted detective in the LAPD. Playing as Phelps the player will solve various cases inspired by

real-life crimes of the same period, climbing the ranks of the police department as they do so.

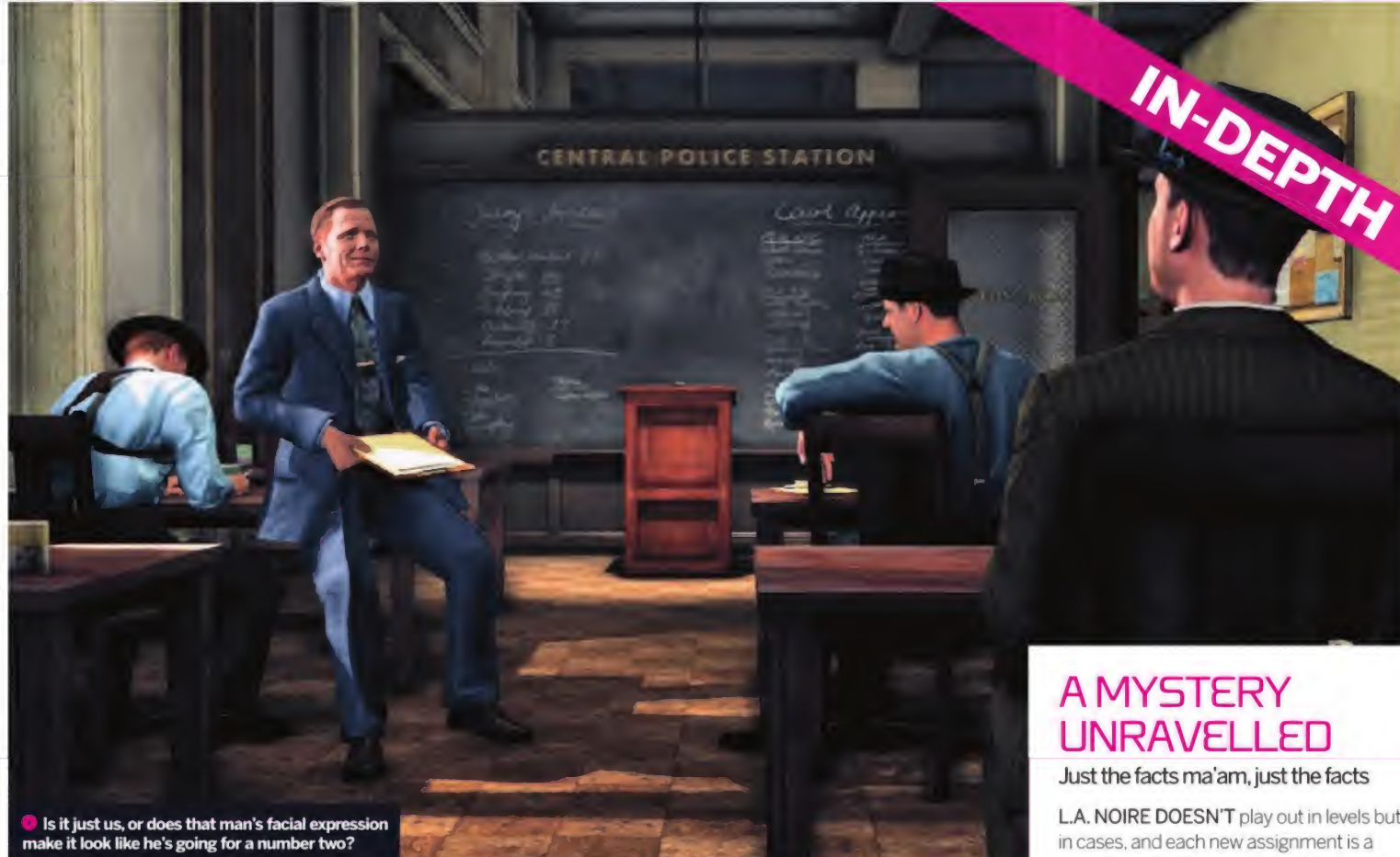
We begin a new case, named *The Fallen Idol*. Phelps is working as a detective on the traffic desk, and a call comes in of a Chevy Styleline that's driven off an escarpment and crashed into a billboard.

A short drive across LA later and we're at the scene, forensic experts and photographers cataloguing the evidence while one of the victims injured in the crash is tended to by a paramedic. A patrol officer tells us that the crash victim claims both she and her passenger were drugged, and that the passenger has been taken to hospital. With us is Phelps' charismatic partner Stefan Bekowsky – each new desk grants Phelps a new partner who can offer help and advice when prompted, although as this case comes quite early in the game there's a bit of hand holding involved and Bekowsky is quick to offer a hint. There's some



● In this level you do nothing but sit and watch your boss do his paperwork for seven hours.



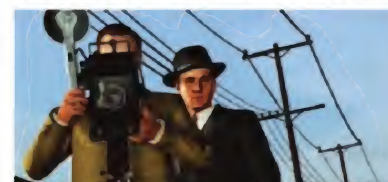


● Is it just us, or does that man's facial expression make it look like he's going for a number two?

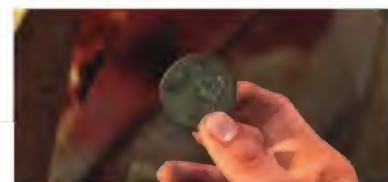
A MYSTERY UNRAVELLED

Just the facts ma'am, just the facts

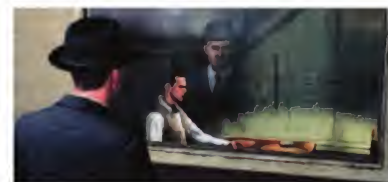
L.A. NOIRE DOESN'T play out in levels but in cases, and each new assignment is a complex web of lies and deceit that must be untangled to discover the truth. Rarely are things as straightforward as they seem. You'll need to be on your toes and use your best detective skills to catch the bad guy.



The first thing you'll have to do is go to the crime scene in question and take a look around. A chat with your partner and the on-scene coroner is a good idea, and could reveal details you may have missed.



Upon finding evidence you'll be able to pick it up and search for any interesting marks or characteristics. It's an important part of solving the case – any clues you find can be used later on when...



...interrogating your witnesses. This could be anyone from suspects, to the victims, to eyewitnesses. Make sure you handle them with care – poor or aggressive questioning can lose you potential leads.



Once you have enough evidence chances are you'll have a definite lead to follow. However, don't be sure about what you'll find once you get there. In *L.A. Noire*, very little plays out the way you'd expect.

● Phelps does his best impression of a slightly inebriated tramp.



● Team Bondi has worked hard to create an accurate portrayal of LA circa 1947.



evidence laid out on the car, he tells us, so we head off to take a look.

The car, crumpled up against an authentic Forties Coca-Cola billboard and with blood sprayed across the dashboard, has a variety of items discovered by the forensics team spread out across its trunk for our perusal. The hospitalised passenger is a minor, we learn, and a letter from her mother back home reveals she's also a runaway. A pair of torn knickers, meanwhile, suggests something sinister has recently occurred. More damaging evidence is found when we discover a rather strange item – a shrunken head that was wedging the Chevy's accelerator to the floor.

Players can examine such items in finer detail, the camera zooming in for a closer perspective over Phelps' hand. The player can then manipulate the object and rotate it at various angles, looking for any interesting or distinguishing marks. In this case Phelps deduces that the idol is a film prop thanks to a stamp on the back.

All of the evidence – the head, the underwear and the letter – is logged in Phelps' notebook, which records any new clues, persons of interest,

As soon as the conversation begins we can tell something's not quite right – just by looking at her face

or pieces of evidence, as well as the locations and details of the case you're working on. It can be brought up at any time and is of particular use during interrogations, which is exactly what we're off to do next.

The woman being tended to by the paramedic is June Ballard – a well-known actress who also happens to be married to an influential mobster. As soon as the conversation begins we can tell something's not quite right – just by looking at her face.

Because, yes, *L.A. Noire's* facial animation is indeed the best we've ever seen. So good, in fact, that it has the potential to change gaming in a very substantial way. It's powered by MotionScan, a new facial performance capture system created by Team Bondi for *L.A. Noire*. Without the need for any markers MotionScan can capture every nuance of an actor's performance and then implement this data into the game. Team Bondi performed this process

with over 300 different actors, which may give you some idea of why it's been in development for seven long years. The result is faces that move and deliver emotion on a scale never before seen in a videogame.

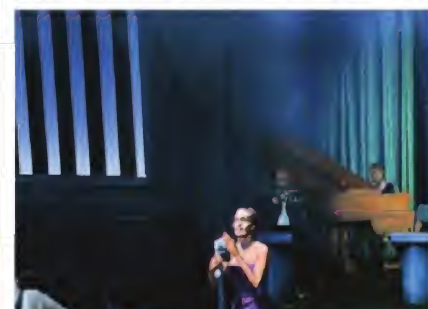
So, June Ballard's face is quite a wonderful sight. Her complexion may look haggard, her skin stretched tight, and there may be a drowsy look to her features, but it's wonderful because we *notice* these things. We can see the subtle shades of emotion that pass over her face, the curl of a lip, the furrow of a brow. We can observe in her face her instant attraction to Phelps when he begins the interrogation and then as a counterpoint, her disregard and aversion to Bekowsky.

There are three options available at any point during a conversation, with Phelps able to believe, doubt or accuse his interrogatee. You need to coax information out of your subject, whether in an aggressive or >

PREVIEW



● We hope some of this style and atmosphere makes its way into the final game.



> tactful manner – it all depends on the person you're questioning. In this case, June appears distrustful, and seems to be attempting to distract Phelps with her sexuality. In questioning her about her underage passenger, we can tell June is lying not because the game *tells* us she is, but because she's biting her lip, looking up and to the left. We're reading the signs on her face, not from a line of dialogue.

So we decide to accuse her of lying – a dangerous tactic as without any evidence we could lose this line of questioning. Thankfully, we have Phelps' notebook, and with it we can select one of our three pieces of evidence to back up our claim that June is telling fibs.

Knowing when to push a suspect like this is key to progression, as is knowing when to use your notebook to reference clues and guide the flow of the conversation. A useful analogy would be to compare *L.A. Noire's* interrogations to an adventure game. Here your inventory isn't made up of rubber chickens with a pulley in the middle, it is a collection of evidence and clues, and the objects you use them on are the suspects and witnesses you interrogate.

But what will happen if you're too aggressive with a suspect, or don't push them far enough and lose that line of questioning? Well, there are no wrong answers, and no dead ends that can kill a case. You'll be graded on your performance – such

as using the correct interrogation techniques – but a poor performance won't end the game. *L.A. Noire's* cases are multifarious and branching, so even if you shutter off one potential witness, there are always other clues and witnesses to follow up on.

The Fallen Idol, for instance, becomes deeper, more complex, and darker than you might imagine, considering its opening as a simple traffic accident. We won't spoil too much here because the reward of figuring it out for yourself is half the fun – but you'll end up investigating a film prop salesman who also has a penchant for abusing young girls. The second case we saw

brawling with goons, cover-based shoot-outs – but that's because they're least deserving of attention.

Also distracting is the discrepancy between an actor's facial performance and the accompanying full-motion body performance that's captured first. Often the bodies of the NPCs you're talking to move like rigid automatons, while their faces are as expressive as yours or ours. It's a noticeable inconsistency.

But there's time between now and the game's release next spring for Team Bondi to smooth out and perfect these issues. And even if it does not, the detective game that forms the core of the experience

Even if you shutter off one potential witness, there are always other clues and witnesses to follow up on

– A Marriage Made In Heaven – similarly brings with it a seemingly open-and-shut case of hit and run, but a life insurance policy on the body, and a suspicious relationship between a bar owner and the victim's wife, means something doesn't quite sit right. In *L.A. Noire*, nothing is ever that simple.

Returning to our earlier point, we question if gamers will buy into this unique brand of gameplay. We've talked very little about the more familiar aspects of the game that take place during Phelps' investigation – trailing suspects,

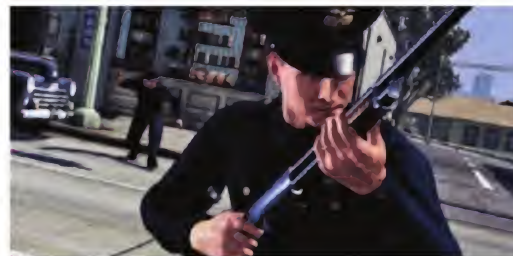
remains utterly new to gaming. Whether or not the same audience that lapped up *GTA IV* and *Red Dead Redemption* will hook on to a concept based on logic and perceptiveness rather than guns, violence and knockaround fun remains to be seen. But we wager, once you witness the potential that resides in those distinctive, emotive facial expressions, you'll feel like you've glimpsed something of the future of gaming, too.

L.A. Noire is being published by Rockstar. Check the website for more details: www.rockstargames.com/lanoire



MOVIN' UP IN THE WORLD

Cole Phelps works his way up the promotional ladder. PHELPS ISN'T A man who wants any favours for his actions during the war, but it gets him fast-tracked through the LAPD nevertheless. As such you'll work at several 'desks' throughout the game. Starting as a patrolman you'll learn the basics in some hand-holding tutorials, before moving onto the traffic desk where your detective skills will truly be put to work. Don't expect to really get into the thick of it until Phelps finds himself on the homicide and vice desks, though. That's where both he and the player will get to see just how depraved post-war LA really is.



WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- This is the first game where it really feels like you're an actual detective.
- The facial animations are the best in any game. Ever.

- This could be the first game ever to be judged on real acting talent.
- If Phelps' hat is knocked off you can pick it up and put it back on. Wow!

READ ME

Before we saw the game Rockstar showed us some Forties and Fifties imagery that inspired *L.A. Noire*. One was of the Black Dahlia corpse, severed at the waist. Nice.



● The running and gunning's not as ingenious as *L.A. Noire's* detective work, but it's still fun.



● There are some beautifully and meticulously rendered interiors in *L.A. Noire*.

A GOOD COP IN A BAD TOWN

A Rockstar lead who's actually a good man with a good heart? That's a first

MEET COLE PHELPS. Brought to life by *Mad Men* actor Aaron Staton, he's a unique character for Rockstar as he's not an Eastern European criminal, nor a grizzled outlaw, nor a violent snuff movie actor. He's a man of good heart, a cop who just wants to do the right thing. He's also a decorated war vet, having fought in WWII's Battle of Okinawa and been awarded the Silver Star for bravery. It's because of his war record that Phelps is fast-tracked through the police department, rising through the ranks of the LAPD and uncovering more of the seedy underbelly of late-Forties LA in the process. It's going to force him to face up to some of his own fears, too – there's some mystery surrounding exactly *what* he did to earn that Silver Star...





● Ground detail now makes the environment seem much more populated and less like a massive flat texture.

RELEASE DATE: Q4 2011

Ace Combat: Assault Horizon

The aces are finally home

PS3 How long has it been since we've seen an *Ace Combat* game on a PlayStation system? And no, the PSP doesn't count (well, it does, obviously, but not in the point we're trying to make). It's been a long, long time, since *Ace Combat Zero: The Belkan War* on the PS2, way back in 2006. There's been one game since then; *Ace Combat 6: Fires Of Liberation*, released on Microsoft's Xbox 360, brought the series in line with all the next-gen HD graphics that it had clearly been crying out for. But what happened after the big green box mercilessly and with callous aforethought hijacked the once-loved darling of the air combat genre?

It's been so long now that the thought of jumping back into the cockpit and taking on the arcade action, mixed with military realism (and overblown Japanese theatricality) has become a questionable proposition. Much has happened since a PlayStation console was home to a Project Aces title and in many ways that's brought with it numerous issues. The

Walking through Project Aces' doors and through Namco Bandai's Tokyo HQ, we're greeted with the nervous glances of a room full of Japanese developers. As we sit ourselves down and prepare for *Ace Combat*'s grand rebooting, we're reminded of the impossibly hectic and cinematic offering of the Tokyo Game Show trailer – that couldn't possibly be actual gameplay, could it? In short, yes, it could; and in long, well, it's going to take quite a bit of description.

"The *Ace Combat* series has run for 15 years and it has been evolving within that time," explains *Assault Horizon*'s producer Kazutoki Kono. "But, some of the fans pointed out that the *Ace Combat* team hasn't been pushing or challenging themselves and it's becoming a little boring and the sales were going down a little bit. When we hear that coming from the fan base, we think that we should change things. This has ended up in us rebooting the franchise." It's an understandable criticism and one often levied at Japanese titles – particularly in

is a mechanic the studio is pegging as a 'game changer' and its genesis finds its home in the same school of thought as the gameplay tweaks and enhancements made in the *H.A.W.X.* series. The computer targeting or the 'off' mode that saw the camera reset to an external view giving you an alternative view on the action – all adequate ways to enhance the action and all seemingly made redundant with what Project Aces is doing. The Close Range Assault is designed to accompany the already well-established gameplay the *Ace Combat* series has provided over the years, but it's doing so in such a way that it's hard to think of it as anything but the perfect missing piece of the puzzle.

Getting close behind a target will see your targeting reticule widen and the camera become loose as it tracks your unfortunate victim. It's in this state that the impressive and kinetic aerial displays shown in the trailer become a gameplay reality. What's striking to see is the huge amount of visual detail now actually makes a difference; individual shots can be seen striking home, forcing planes into hundreds of inky black pieces or the pilot into a steep turn, complete with sound-barrier-breaking atmosphere effects. It's frantic and cinematic stuff, especially when the camera dynamically reacts to the chase, highlighting your turrets or missiles primed to fire. "The reason we wanted to bring the combat to a close-range distance," explains art director Masato Kano, "was, well, the person who has always played the *Ace Combat* series is having fun, but seeing it from the back will probably think it's a flying game about chasing a dot – what's fun about that? So, what we wanted to do was have more excitement and entertainment within the gameplay that everyone would feel instantly 'wow!' Everything has ➤

Individual shots can be seen striking home, forcing planes into hundreds of inky black pieces or the pilot into a steep turn

industry is now a very different place, the development process has been refined and focused on blockbuster mega-hits; in many ways the once-confident studios of Japan have taken a bit of knock. Since its long-standing absence, we've seen the emergence of a more than competent rival enter into the sphere with Ubisoft's *H.A.W.X.*, which made one thing clear from the start. It intended to usurp the quirkier elements of *Ace Combat* and replace them with po-faced American military theatrics in a bid to satisfy the audience's desire to take to the skies.

recent years. But how is *Assault Horizon* addressing these most fundamental of issues? With the clear intention of rebooting the brand – notice it's not *Ace Combat 7* – Project Aces has worked from the ground up with the specific objective of giving the staple aerial combat a right good kick up the arse.

If your previous perception of flying games was of incredibly powerful planes travelling really slowly and shooting at targets very, very far away, then *Assault Horizon* is going to give you a very nasty shock. 'Close Range Assault'



● Chasing a plane close to the ground sees all manner of destructible environmental dangers getting in your way.

● The new helicopter gameplay sections should break up the pace nicely, adding in some much needed variety.



● The new dynamic cameras make the Close Range Assault feel hugely exciting.





● The Close Range Assault is easily countered, a move that will be key during the recently announced multiplayer.

● If someone comes into a killing position, get ready to defend yourself with a counter move.



REACH FOR THE SKIES

Project Ace's art designer Masato Kano

The *Ace Combat* games have always used some impressive tech to achieve the photo-real look, but what's being done that's new on *Assault Horizon*?

We have been using the Geo Eye satellite photos we've used before but this time what we've done differently is that by using two different satellite photos we can pick up the location we want to use and combine them. We'll then use them as the base and add in a lot more detail as gameplay is much closer to the ground this time around. When we're using the real world it's not like we can just take it directly from the satellite and use it in the game, so we've had to rely a lot more on our designer's sense.

When the visual team were told 'when you're high up we want it this way and when you're down low we want it another' it was frustrating. We've always been really good at making the terrain look great from a high altitude, but we'd never really challenged ourselves to get the ground detail up. When we did and could see what we could do, we felt this was exactly what *Assault Horizon* needed – the destruction and huge amounts of detail right in front of you. In that sense, the frustration was gone when the gameplay started falling into place.

What's all this about a US military author helping out with *Assault Horizon*'s story and characters?

We haven't revealed who the author is just yet but he's brought much to the project. It started out with big things like advice such as 'Europeans and Americans don't think that way' and the way we'd have approached certain aspects would be specific to the Japanese market and outside audiences wouldn't feel the same. Even when it came to small, tiny details like using certain aircraft on particular missions; all the specialised military things normal people don't really know about. He's been able to step in and tell us those things. At first the team was a little hesitant, worried they would have to rebuild much of what had been done, but with his advice we've been able to create a much more realistic experience.

PREVIEW



Let's hope the melodrama and cheesy storytelling really has been left behind.



SHOCK AND AWE

Get a little closer to your enemy



If you're a staunch *Ace Combat* fan, the gameplay can be much the same as it's always been, but if you fancy getting closer, you'll be in for an insane dogfight.



Zero in on your intended victim and you'll soon be on his tail. Here you'll be able to see exactly how much damage your missiles and bullets are doing.



You'll usually have to avoid a building or a falling crane or tower as the desperate pilot attempts to shake you off. It might not be strictly realistic, but it is fun.



In a dangerous move, your advantage can be lost as planes can thrust straight up, stalling. This should see you shoot past, giving them a firing position.



Project Aces outsourced its character design to the team behind Cole from *inFamous*.





● We have to say, the flight genre was in dire need of something to sex it up.



IN-DEPTH

● How much help is granted to the player when in the Close Range Assault mode is unclear, as it can look rather confusing.

● Getting this close to the carnage shows just how much damage can be done.



➤ stemmed from this decision to keep the combat close."

It's easy to see where the work has gone. In this gameplay state the AI planes will do anything to get away, forcing themselves towards the realistically rendered cityscapes. It's darting through the high-rise buildings of Dubai that we realise there's an incredible amount of damage that wayward missiles are causing to the surrounding environment. So much so that the plane is forced into an impossible climb to avoid a falling crane. It's a far cry from the *Ace Combat* we remember. "The engine's been really difficult to make," says Kano, "and we still have all the aircraft battles high up in the air. Visually people always say that when you're high up you don't need that much detail, but when you're, say, riding a helicopter, you want to see every detail of one human being. That's incredibly difficult for a programmer, you simply can't do that, it's been a massive compromise between both the departments that's been constantly back and forth."

No doubt the reworked engine has gone some way to making sure the new direction for *Ace Combat* was possible; few flight games ever attempt such high ground detail, but that's not all that's been changed. For many, the Japanese melodrama of the series' story has been an element either loved or loathed. The mix of seriousness and ridiculous came to a head in *Fires Of Liberation* when it sat awkwardly within the narrative, making each cut-scene

a laughable affair. "Since the team is wholly Japanese," explains Kono, "we were unaware that previous storylines were focused around Japanese thoughts and culture that much. While making *Assault Horizon* we became aware that our way of thinking is quintessentially Japanese and so we're using a US author [not yet revealed] and listening to his comments in order to satisfy Western audiences."

This decision has seen the narrative shift from fictional states to the real world, as ace pilot William Bishop and his wingman Jose Gutierrez are hot on the heels of a super WMD acquired by a group of anti-government insurgents. "The main reason we've changed the setting from the traditional universe to the real world," says Kono, "is that the series has always had a good fantasy setting but it was becoming too big of a pillar. We found that because we had this setting a person that has played AC and wanted to enthuse their experiences with a friend, would find it difficult. Saying stuff like, 'did you see that scene in Estovakia! It was so hot!' – the usual response would be 'where?'"

It's a calculated decision that brings *Assault Horizon* in line with the top-selling FPSs that are occupying Western PS3s and puts the game in a much more action-orientated and *Call Of Duty* frame. The reveal that players will also be jumping into the cockpits of helicopters and seeing the action from an alternative view can also be ascribed to this new direction. The

comparison with *COD* is something the fans have been quick to point out. "COD is such a phenomenon, it's really exciting to be compared to such a game," says Kono. "Especially when Japanese development is kind of going on the downside compared to Western studios." It not only represents a shift for the series away from previous entries, but also of a Japanese developer bringing its vision in line with Western sensibilities but managing to retain an artistic element the country has become known for.

Assault Horizon has a very distinct and bold direction, and is such a visceral experience to see moving, that it's hard not to get swept away in its energy. Project Aces is taking the negative energy levelled at Japanese developers and funneling it through and into its creative output, it's almost as if the West has simply laid down the gauntlet. "By playing *H.A.W.X*. I was initially alarmed," concludes Kano, "because it was the first time we'd really had a rival in the genre. But when I played it, I thought that the *Ace Combat* series would never go in the same direction. I felt relieved because I knew we were taking *Assault Horizon* into a totally new place. We're not saying *H.A.W.X*. is bad, it's now different. Maybe the *H.A.W.X*. team will think *Assault Horizon* is not the right direction to go in?" Perhaps it could mean the return of more than just a well-loved PlayStation brand.

Assault Horizon is being developed by Project Aces. For more info visit www.uk.namcobandaigames.eu

ALL YOUR PLANES BELONG TO US

Why we'll miss the super carriers

WHILE WE SAT watching as the Project Aces team gleefully showed off the new gameplay it's been hard at work on over the last few years, we couldn't help but think the new realistic direction would force out the series' insane streak. With the realism spelling an end to the super carriers and more fantastical elements the *Ace Combat* series has always had fun including, what's going to replace them? Big, huge planes, apparently, that must be attacked up close. Oh, and helicopters, plus insane numbers of near misses of shiny skyscrapers. That should probably do it.



WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- It's *Ace Combat*, back on the PlayStation, after all these years.
- It still looks stunning up high and the ground detail is now equally impressive.
- The new Close Range Assault combat looks like it could potentially revolutionise air combat.
- No more melodrama, and a story penned with Western audiences in mind.

READ ME

The year is 2015 and the world stands on the brink of war, time to jump into some of the most expensive planes ever made then.

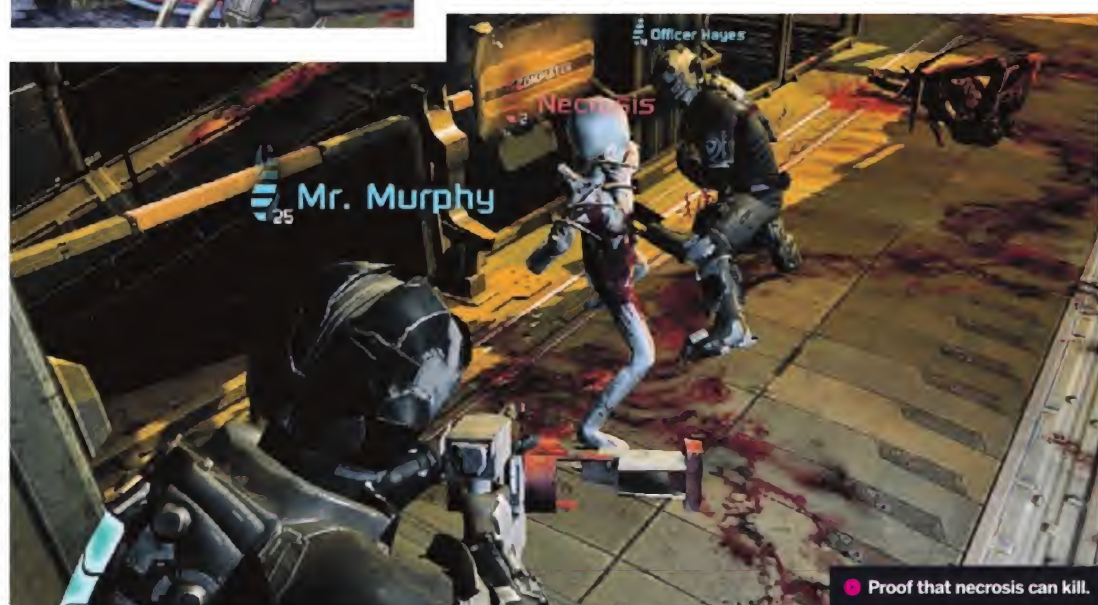
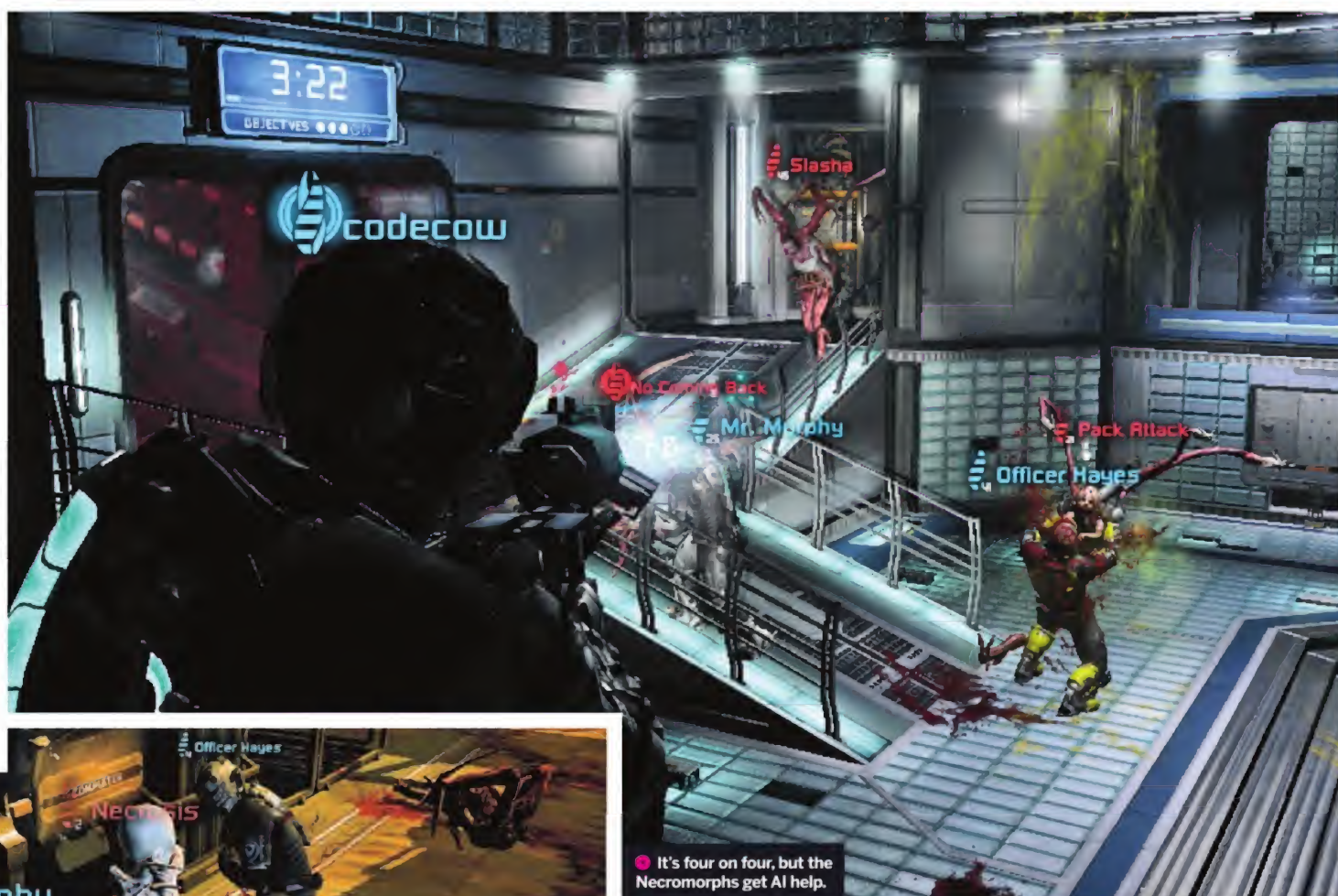
PREVIEW

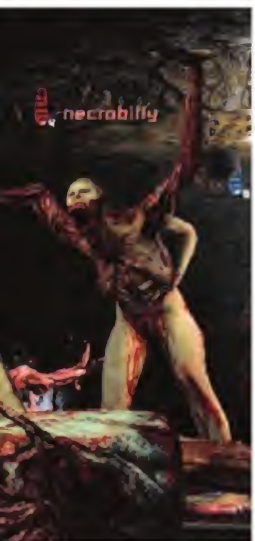


THE OPINIONS OF OTHERS

Because it's always good to get a balanced view

WHILE AT THE EA event where we were able to play *Dead Space 2*, we decided to take a quick straw poll of all the other games media types there. While, obviously, their opinions aren't as spectacular as ours, they did nevertheless have some nuggets to share. "That's better than I expected," said one. "Aieeee!" another remarked. "I like being able to chop your head off while playing as a tiny naked demon baby thing," a third said before being escorted from the premises (names have been omitted so as not to give them the glory they crave). All very encouraging.





RELEASE DATE: 28 JANUARY

Dead Space 2

Get your ass to The Sprawl

PS3

We've been hearing a lot about *Dead Space 2*'s multiplayer over the last few months and it's always left us curious. What will it play like? Won't it undermine the rest of the game? Can I play as a weird, naked demon-baby thing? Well, now we have answers, and they are: well, no and yes. But we really should elaborate.

The first thing that struck us about *Dead Space 2* – not just the multiplayer, but in general – was the

From a multiplayer perspective, though, we had far less concerns. Coming from the standpoint that we had no idea why Visceral was putting online play in the game might have initially coloured our judgement, but what we were presented with was a fun, balanced and fitting multiplayer component that looks like it will complement the single-player experience quite well indeed.

The game modes we were able to play showed how the developer

words), in others it was collecting bomb pieces in order to blow the scum-sucking Necromorphs back to hell (note: they may not actually be from hell). These mini-missions are simple enough as to not interfere with a lot of the run-around-killing-things action, but it's good to see the addition, as it brings focus to the online game. As for the Necromorph side, what we saw of their missions involved decapitating as many human players as they could, pretty much. To be fair, it wouldn't exactly fit the canon if they had to play any other way.

The different Necromorphs available – the classes, if you will – offer players a few unique ways of tackling enemies. You could sit back and vomit on your opponent from a distance, before closing the gap while they're still (vomit-)stunned and chopping them up. Or you could be a naked demon-baby thing and dive onto a man's face, slicing wildly before decapitating them. Then, of

course, you could scamper about on ceilings, hiding in the shadows and taking potshots. Or, obviously, you could run at them with all your pointy limbs ready to do some slicing. As daft as we're making it sound, there does actually seem to be a fair bit of strategy on show with the Necromorph classes and with how they interact with each other. One player stunning while another moves in for the close-up kill is a simple, but effective, strategy that our team began to employ after just a short period playing. The scope for other, similar (but more interesting) tactics is an element that can't be overlooked, especially on an online mode many expected to be throwaway and shallow. In fact, that's the feeling we got from the whole of *Dead Space 2*'s multiplayer – it may well be a lot more than we expected.

Dead Space 2 is being developed by Visceral Games. Check out www.deadspace.ea.com for more details.

What we saw of the Necromorph's missions involved them decapitating as many human players as they could

pace. While it's nowhere near being a speedy game when compared to many other action romps, there's been a clear emphasis on speeding things up that little bit this time around. Characters are more responsive, and the stomp function is quick enough to actually be useful against still-living enemies. It doesn't look like it will upset the balance of things, though we do still have our concerns – after all, the plodding nature of the first game is part of what made things so scary. We shall see how it turns out.

is trying to inject purpose into what could have just been a free-for-all. The human side, made up of Sprawl security forces, have a number of objectives to complete in order to win the round. In some cases this meant activating consoles around the map (holding ⊗), in other

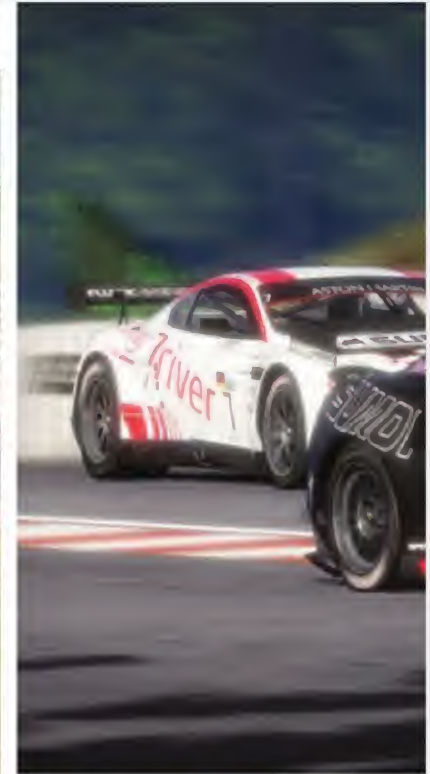
WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- The game has translated remarkably well to online.
- They're different scares, but the multiplayer definitely makes you jump.
- The Necromorphs bring a suitably varied approach to combat.
- Chopping a bloke's head off as a demon-baby thing: priceless.

READ ME

Dead Space was single-player only, but it could be fun for multiple people by sitting in the same room as the player and shrieking intermittently.

PREVIEW



RELEASE DATE: TBC

Not pictured: a Rover Metro.

Shift 2: Unleashed

Unleashing the helmet for all to see

PS3 Before seeing *Shift 2: Unleashed* for the first time we wondered aloud with colleagues about what exactly Slightly Mad Studios could do with the game. It would make it look better, sure. It could improve some things under the hood that we wouldn't notice in a million years, of course. It could make the helmet cam better – 'ha ha', we laughed. So obviously the most apparent change we saw when the game was presented to us was the helmet cam, which has become more than just a bit of pretty visual work. We stopped laughing in our witty, sarcastic manner at that point.

The changes to *Shift 2: Unleashed*, aside from dropping the *Need For Speed* moniker (though this is definitely still an EA-released *Need For Speed* game), are instantly apparent. The game looks nicer than previous entries, with a lot of effort put into night-time racing, the lighting effects therein and the general feel of the visuals – an area in which the first

game was no slouch. Tweaks have, of course, been performed under the hood, meaning the racing model is more accurate than last time around. The helmet cam, however, actually changes the way you play in certain respects, and it's one of the most interesting aspects of an otherwise pretty straightforward sequel.

Whereas before it was a visual effect, rocking about in the manner a human head in a car would, the helmet cam is now a lot more rounded – it actually affects elements of the game. Aside from the fact you are able to see the helmet itself – a nice visual effect – the 'head' you inhabit actually turns to look at the apex of a corner, meaning that you are given a much clearer visual clue on where you should be aiming your vehicle. Okay, so it's not particularly world-changing, but it was different enough for us to pay attention, and once we got used to it it was definitely useful for our otherwise-questionable ability to take corners properly.

The racing itself feels like the *Shift* of old, though arguably with a slightly more 'real' feeling to the handling mechanics. After we'd managed to adjust our brains (a lot of *Need For Speed: Hot Pursuit* play does not lend

are any huge additions to come to the formula we do not know, but what we've been able to play so far is definitely a good time.

The Autolog feature makes its return after a successful run-out on

Shift 2: Unleashed won't revolutionise any elements of the original game, but it has absolutely no need to do that

itself to a successful jump to *Shift 2*) it was all simple enough. With driving aids on, you barely have to look at the screen to get a respectable result, but turn them off – as you should – and you have an intense, challenging racing game that doesn't emphasise its realism over the fun factor. If there

the recently released *Need For Speed: Hot Pursuit*. The system, which simply ranks your time against that of your friends – it's a lot better than it sounds, honestly – would appear to have been improved upon from what we saw. Your time is now set against that of your friends, as well as the best players in the

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- Helmet cam is improved, making it more involving than ever.
- We're interested to see where this mix of *NFS* games goes.

- More use of the Autolog feature is undoubtedly a very good thing.
- It's a very pretty game, naturally, and is arguably the best-looking *NFS* game so far.

UPDATE



● Fortunately this isn't a helmet cam shot, just before the car hits.



● Shift, of course, is the more realistic of the NFS games.



● Not sure about the colour choice, but hey ho.



● Night-time racing has been worked on to make it beautiful.



SLIGHTLY MAD SIMULATOR

Where does it fit in?

WE WERE SLIGHTLY confused about the original *Shift*'s place in the world of gaming. Slightly Mad Studios is pushing for a realistic and in-depth simulation of the world of racing, but is it something that can compete with the likes of *Gran Turismo 5*? We don't know. But it does look like *Shift 2: Unleashed* will once again straddle the ground between sim and arcade, though still with a much bigger emphasis on simulation aspects. How much the game will move towards one side or the other we don't know, as our time with *Shift 2* didn't reveal a huge amount.

world and possibly other opponents, too. It's another simple step in what is already quite a straightforward system, and we welcome what it can do for the racing genre.

Generally speaking, though, we will be looking at business as usual. There's nothing we've seen so far to suggest *Shift 2: Unleashed* will revolutionise any elements of the original game, but it has absolutely no need to do that. This will likely be an incremental update – a larger increment than would be expected from a yearly release, but incremental nonetheless. Refined and rejigged; we have absolutely no issue with that.

Shift 2: Unleashed is being developed by Slightly Mad Studios. Check out www.slightlymadstudios.com for updates and details about the game.

READ ME

The sequel to last year's *Need For Speed: Shift*, which came out of nowhere and bagged itself a really very impressive 81%. Hopefully this one will be as good.





RELEASE DATE: 11 MARCH

Dragon Age II

Have any games had a Mass(ive) Effect on this one?

PS3

From now on we're going to look at the first *Dragon Age* as an experiment.

One to see if old-style RPGs are still viable on console, and one that showed the world that, well – they are. At the same time, it was a game that felt older than it really should have. We expected an old *feel*, we were presented with both that and some decidedly aged technology backing the whole thing up. This time around it looks like BioWare is set to continue the feel while bringing the actual game experience up to the standards we expect.

It's not as simple as a *Mass Effect*-ification of the formula, though the look of the conversation wheel and the instant 'press attack, actually attack' controls may say otherwise. No, this is still distinctly *Dragon Age*, beards and all, but with more immediacy and involvement – buzzwords employed by BioWare's own. The whole experience is faster, and the simple fact that when you press a button your character attacks makes a lot of difference. Specials and magic also seemed

so much more responsive than the rather stilted effects of *Origins*.

Our brief demo covered the basic tenets. We were introduced to one of the characters that can be recruited into the player's group in the shape of Isabella. A feisty pirate, she offered some dialogue backed up with enough sass to make us remark, "oh, she's quite sassy". We also covered combat and the conversation system, which is now more in line with that offered by the *Mass Effect* series. Though one change to the chatting options is that the game shows you how you will address your conversationee, so there's no risk of accidentally screaming "I HATE YOU!" in the face of a beautiful lady/man/elf.

Dragon Age II looks like it will turn out well, though we had little doubt of that. BioWare is making the console versions more for the actual consoles, therefore meaning we'll have a far better tailored RPG to sink dozens of hours into.

Dragon Age II is being developed by BioWare. Check out www.dragonage.bioware.com for more details.



● Combat is far more responsive and instant than it was in *Origins*.

ROGUE LIKE

Class warfare

DRAGON AGE'S ROGUES weren't the best of classes. In fact, a lot of the time they ended up just being glorified warriors. BioWare has addressed this issue specifically, and the Hawke we played as (the human hero) took full advantage of his newfound rogueish tendencies. Quick back strikes, backflips out of harm's way – far better than the last effort.



WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- A more direct action take on the stilted combat of the original.
- We don't wholly agree, but it has been *Mass Effect*-ified a bit.
- You get a sexy pirate woman in your gang, which is always nice.
- Beards. You may have noticed we're rather partial to a good beard.

READ ME

Dragon Age: Origins, the first game in the series, was at one point BioWare's biggest-selling release. Though the PS3 only contributed under the 1 million mark.



You can see pretty quickly that *Two Worlds II* has a new layer of polish.



FIRST LOOK

There are all sorts of weapons to find, create and master as you play.



RELEASE DATE: MARCH



Rhinos aren't exactly the kind of threat we would have expected from *Two Worlds II*.



Two Worlds II

Does that make Four Worlds then?

PS3 While to many of us *Two Worlds* has become slang for games that are so unintentionally hilarious and broken that they stop being funny pretty quickly, there are actually still a lot of fans around. Hence, forsooth, we have a sequel on the way. Thankfully some additional work has been put into making this one work a hell of a lot better than the last one. For instance, horses have gone completely to avoid any repeat of the scary gravity-defying hill horses of the last game.

The most interesting additions are online, which was previously unexplored. Drop-in, drop-out co-op, for instance, allows you to explore

a set of standalone missions with a friend, earning XP and items along the way. There are also Trophies to be earned on these missions and everything goes back into your online character. The more you play the better you'll get, so replay value is pretty high.

Two Worlds II also features a solo village building game that you can take online for others to visit. This is a kind of community simulator with a fixed area of land, slots for building mills or blacksmiths and so on. It will also present you with challenges as giant spiders or some other form of horror beset the village. Levelling

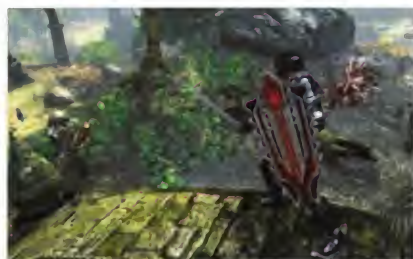
up your village will give you access to better weapons and in turn make you stronger for online play.

It's all looking pretty interesting and far more stable than the last

It's looking more stable than the last game ever was

game ever was. It still feels a little hockey in places with its light medieval touch, but there should be some fun to be had. Fingers crossed things keep going smoothly with the PS3 build.

Two Worlds II is being developed by Reality Pump. You can get more info on the game at <http://twoworlds2.com>



GOING SOLO

Story drives the single-player

WHILE THE MULTIPLAYER is very customisable, you're a bit more restricted in your options during the single-player campaign. This is a story-driven campaign that requires that you play through as a human. Online you can be human or elf or dwarf. There's still lots to customise in single-player, though, such as weapons and armour.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- Brand-new online component to the series with mission-based co-op.
- Classic sword-and-sorcery gameplay with plenty of orcs and magic spells.
- Crafting system allows you to level up weapons on the fly.
- Focused single-player is still open world and story driven from the start.

READ ME

According to the game's European publisher, *Two Worlds II* was delayed by it taking too long to print the Blu-rays for the PS3.

PREVIEW

IN-DEPTH



RELEASE DATE: 25 MARCH

Crysis 2

Dozens of augmented future warriors battling in the streets. And in the game

PS3

Crysis 2's multiplayer had remained something of an enigma – we knew it was being made by Crytek UK (formally Free Radical), but that was about it. But all of that changed when we got to play it at a recent event. We once were blind, and now can see. Unless you have stealth engaged, but more on that later.

We were able to play two modes, one a simple team deathmatch and the other involving what are essentially command points – items on the map that need to be reached and defended in order to accrue points and progress to the next artefact. Of alien origin, of course. We were promised more modes will ship with the finished game, but these were all we were able to play.

The base mechanics of the game are incredibly solid, but it's through the use of the Nanosuit's powers that the game gets really interesting online. All players have two standing powers in the shape of armour – making you more resilient for a short period – and stealth – making you near-invisible.

Along with super-running and super-jumping it makes for a level, if not super-powered, playing field. From there players can choose from a pre-determined list of classes or come up with their own creation, picking a couple of weapons and a few modular enhancements to further customise their style of play. Early warning systems, for example, show enemies on the radar much faster than normal. Silent running offers the ability to... well, run silently, making it easier to sneak up on opponents. What we played showed it to be a very good system, offering perks while not upsetting the balance, and the standing stealth and armour powers offer a fine base to work from.

Our time with *Crysis 2* was very encouraging. What started out as a very standard experience soon revealed tactical nuance the like of which is sure to hold the interest of players for a long time. This game looks better by the day.

Crysis 2 is being developed by Crytek. Check out <http://crytek.com/games/crysis2/overview> for more details.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- Multiplayer made by a developer known for making great multiplayer.
- Modular combat makes for some interesting, individual approaches.
- The core mechanics are solid, and stealth is a lot of fun.
- On top of all the other good stuff, *Crysis 2* still looks really nice.

READ ME

Crysis 2's multiplayer is being developed by Crytek UK – formerly known as Free Radical. Once it is done here, we still have hope that it'll release *TimeSplitters 4*.

The fight over who got to use the last toilet roll had escalated.

Stealth is useful, but you can still be seen... just about.

We saw a lot of this going on. You have to be on your guard.

I HAVE NO FRIENDS

But don't feel left out

WHILE OUR HANDS-ON here was only with the multiplayer component of *Crysis 2*, rest assured the single-player aspect is coming along spiffingly. At least, that's what we've been led to believe so far. Hopefully we'll be able to see a bit more of it before the game actually comes out, but for now we can rest easy, as it looks really nice.



● *Child Of Eden* promises to be one beautiful game.



FIRST LOOK

● Yes, there is indeed an end-of-level boss that looks like a disco ball.

RELEASE DATE: Q1 2011

Child Of Eden

Will we be moved by Mizuguchi's latest?

PS3

Watching Tetsuya Mizuguchi at E3, playing a game that looked and sounded like *Rez* but was something much more, we felt a twinge of something we thought impossible. We felt jealousy of Microsoft's Kinect.

Seeing Mizuguchi trace arcs of attack fire with broad sweeps of his arm and clear the screen of incoming viruses with a triumphant reach for the sky, we couldn't help but think; this is the way we want to play *Child Of Eden*.

At the time of writing Move integration had not been announced. But even if it were implemented could it deliver the same experience as Kinect? The feeling of conducting an orchestra of sound and light with only your hands? *Child Of Eden* is the *only* game we can think of where lack of a controller might be a good thing.

But still, this is a game that's about more than just waving your hands. It's a game about spectacular visuals, wonderful sounds, and combining the two in a way we've never seen before.

The game undeniably shares the same DNA as the 2001 on-rails shooter

Rez, utilising the same paint-and-release mechanic that allows you to lock onto up to eight targets before releasing your attack. There's also a new auto-fire move that's used to rapidly take out large swarms of enemies.

Like *Rez* these mechanics are just the tools the player uses to drive an audiovisual synesthetic experience like no other. Enemies are organic and flowing creatures, surrounded by swirls of glowing petals and feathers, while the levels look like natural constructions made of nerve cells, tree branches and spiralling galaxies. It's truly breathtaking stuff, and tied together by an unobtrusive narrative that's concerned with humanity, emotions, history.

We may have felt a small stab of jealousy sat in that audience at E3, but the most prominent emotion we feel right now is excitement either way. Whether we're playing it with pad in hand, a Move controller, or nothing at all, we're sure to enjoy it all the same.

Learn more about *Child Of Eden* at the official site: <http://child-of-eden.uk.ubi.com>



● If you're playing for high scores the accuracy of the pad is the only option.



● We're not sure what this is. Some kind of disco jellyfish, we presume.



● Unlike *Rez* we won't see our avatar evolve, as *Child Of Eden* is first person.

THE JOURNEY PROJECT

Mizuguchi petitions gamers to appear in *Child Of Eden*

CHILD OF EDEN is about a girl called Lumi. 200 years after her death scientists try to remake her computer consciousness in the virtual world of Eden, but a virus gets in which the player needs to erase. The final level sees the player purify Lumi, causing all the happy memories of earth to spill out. These 'memories' are to be photos that have been sent in through the *Child Of Eden* website.



WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

■ The concept document was a 40-page poem.

■ Mizuguchi's own band, Genki Rockets, supplies the music.

■ You could actually feature in the game.

■ It features a giant, floating space whale. Sold.

READ ME

Child Of Eden is the spiritual successor to *Rez*, the 2001 on-rails synesthesia shooter. Y'know, the one that came with the Trance Vibrator...

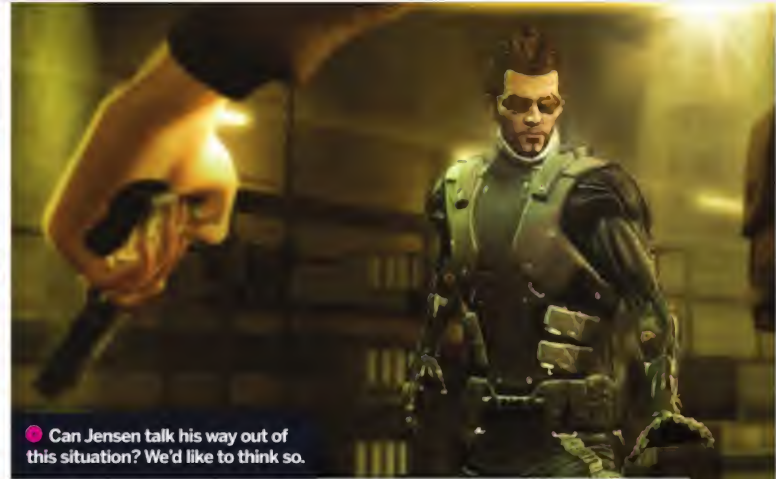


● And here we see the player fighting a giant space whale, naturally.

PREVIEW



For all its RPG elements *Deus Ex* will always be an FPS at heart.



Can Jensen talk his way out of this situation? We'd like to think so.



Adam Jensen's investigation is likely to implicate and cross some powerful people.

RELEASE DATE: MARCH

Deus Ex: Human Revolution

Arming gamers with the right to choose

PS3 When you look at the line-up of games coming to PS3 in 2011, what strikes you? Is it the amazing number of Sony exclusives we're expecting this year? Is it the strength of the new IP line-up? We would like to hope that by now you're beginning to see a string of very intelligent and complex games coming your way and chief among them at the moment is *Deus*

That was something very important to Eidos Montreal according to game director Jean-François Dugas. "The game world is designed around a multi-path, multi-solution approach so any objective can be approached in different ways," he told us. "Whether you like action, stealth, hacking or social, you can complete objectives in different ways." The big word here is 'choice'.

Those who have never experienced what *Deus Ex* has to offer should start getting interested right now

Ex: Human Revolution, a gaming workout for your brain.

What's wonderful about Eidos Montreal's prequel to the hugely popular and influential cyberpunk series is that you probably won't notice just how much it is throwing philosophy and politics at you. You'll be far more interested in exploring the bottomless depths of the upgrade system, the wonderful web of the conversation system and the shadowy subtlety of the stealth system. Throw in some first-person shooting, a little computer hacking and some hand-to-hand combat and clearly you have a game that ticks a lot of very cool boxes at once.

which hasn't always been all it's cracked up to be in some games.

In our last preview we talked a little about how choice worked in *Human Revolution* and the fact that it's more than picking from two dialogue options in a cut-scene. It's about being able to complete a mission in multiple different ways with unique but potentially beneficial outcomes that suit your style of play as much as the needs of the objective. That's what 'next-gen' gaming should be all about, it's what *Deus Ex* has always been about and it's what *Human Revolution* lives and breathes.

Supporting the four pillars of combat, stealth, hacking and social

interactions are layer upon layer of augmentations and upgrades. However, Adam Jensen's newly militarised body only has so many slots for adding upgrades so you'll need to specialise if you want to get the most from him. Then you might want to play through the game again and again trying the methods you hadn't got around to. And you will want to see them all, because Eidos Montreal is promising some pretty amazing augmented moves.

"Our augmentations will be based on scientific concepts (some already happening to a certain degree and some others a bit more 'futuristic' yet credible)," Dugas revealed. "Actually, we have consultants that help us keep it grounded, who are located at the University of Texas at Dallas and works with people at DARPA. Unlike the first *Deus Ex*, which had nano-augmentations, augmentations in our game are the precursor to that technology... The big advantage of going mechanically augmented is that it allows us to see the character's physical nature and it also allows us to come up with some sort of uncanny physical moves that wouldn't make as much sense with nano-technology."

This is also the explanation behind the shift back and forth from first-

person to third-person as it allows you to see some of Adam's cool takedowns, even if it does break away from the traditions of the series. It also gives us a better look at Adam Jensen so we can enjoy seeing how he develops through the game. It is ultimately his personal story, in the middle of all the conspiracy and espionage, that will keep us hooked. "The circumstances of Adam being critically wounded, and the impetus for his life-saving operation, are suspect," Dugas teased without revealing too much of what's to come. "Is becoming augmented something Adam was ready for? Or wanted at all? And who supplied him with his military-grade augmentations?"

These questions are just the tip of a rather large and slippery iceberg that will go to the heart of humanity's future and set up the events already depicted in the original *Deus Ex* titles. Jensen is driven in part by his employer Sarif Industries and in part by personal motivation to get to the bottom of the whole affair. That journey will take him from nightclubs to penthouse apartments and labs to police stations, working all sides to get to the truth. It promises already to be quite a ride and while some of the old fans of the series may still want to be cautious, those of you who have never experienced what *Deus Ex* has to offer should start getting interested right now.

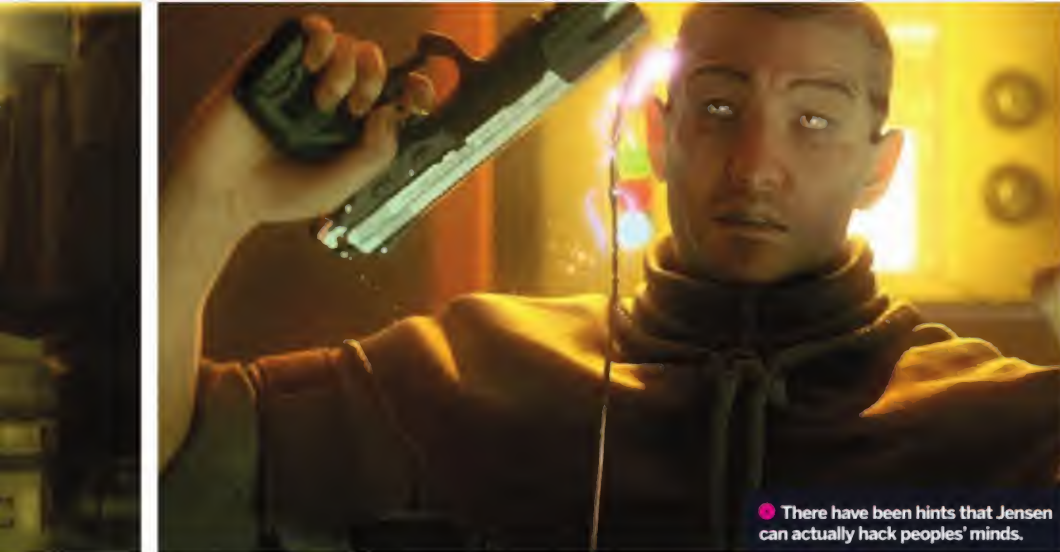
WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- A finely balanced mixture of play styles that will give you true freedom of choice.
- A deep and weighty plot that still won't get in the way of the action.
- Some very involved social and hacking mechanics that you can completely ignore.
- Basically promises to let you make the game what you want it to be.

READ ME

Original *Deus Ex* creator Warren Spector has seen *Human Revolution* and by all accounts liked what he saw.

Eidos Montreal is the team behind *Deus Ex: Human Revolution* and you can find trailers and screens at its official site www.deusex.com



● There have been hints that Jensen can actually hack peoples' minds.



IN-DEPTH

● The levels of detail promise to be jaw dropping and very distracting.



THE ICARUS QUESTION

A running theme gets more complex

FROM THE FIRST *Human Revolution* trailer there has been a running theme of Adam Jensen seemingly having dreams about flying up towards the Sun and his wings being melted away. This is a fairly clear reference to the myth of Icarus, something *GOW* players will know well. One of the most recent trailers now shows Adam in a pod seemingly being fired into the sky. This would tie nicely with the Icarus dream, but isn't Jensen a security expert? What's he doing in a rocket? This, like many other things, is a mystery we will have to unravel when the game arrives.



● A renaissance look was chosen for the clothing to tie into the idea of human revolution.



PREVIEW



● We thought he was a hill. He is not a hill.



● Double-double-barrelled shotgun: bliss.

RAMP IT UP

Standard is good, but upgrades is gooder

INITIALLY, WEAPONS IN *Bulletstorm* will be great. A quad-barrelled shotgun capable of melting skin. Using the Flail Gun to wrap two grenades around a mutant's neck: funny. But there is an element of depth to the madness, thrown in to try to hold your attention for a while. Simple upgrades – such as reload speeds – can be purchased and applied to weapons. It's not a big point, but we'd said everything we wanted to say in the main text. Oh, and it adds a layer of depth.



● Enemies range in type, but are generally of the hordeish variety.



● We're still regularly surprised by the pretties on show.



There's an undeniable feeling of *Borderlands* about this.



RELEASE DATE: FEBRUARY 2011



Jai alai is well-represented in *Bulletstorm*.

Bulletstorm

Because base level is the best level

PS3

That very first image of *Bulletstorm*, appearing on the cover of *Game Informer* magazine all those months ago, seems like a different world. Back then we saw something that looked uninteresting – stupid, even. It looked like everything that was wrong with games and the kind of thing that would make us turn and walk the other way.

But then something weird happened. Rather than turn out to be Giant Space Marines Violently Dismembering Generic Enemies, *Bulletstorm* showed us it was the former, but With Gusto, Character And A Sense Of Humour. Then we got bored of writing silly faux-genres for the game and decided to just say it outright: we misjudged *Bulletstorm*. For the last few months since we first found out what the game is all about we've been biding our time before we could play it. Having had a session with both single and multiplayer, we're in the position to say our earlier enthusiasm was not let down.

The single-player mode we were introduced to was called Echo. Put simply, it's score attack, based on levels you travel through in the main campaign, with the intention of scoring as highly as possible

through the combo kills *Bulletstorm* is so very taken with. Rather than just presenting the levels as is, Echo sees the levels stripped of storyline elements and has players jacked up powers-wise. What this does is make the mode a pure test of skill – everyone starts on an even playing field, so whoever can score the most points does so because they're the best, not because they're more powerful. Though, of course, blind luck can very easily come in and complicate matters.

The basic premise behind *Bulletstorm* is a simple one, but it's one executed well enough to seem like so much more than it is. You are awarded points for killing the enemy, but if you want more points you need to dispatch them in more imaginative, interesting ways. Shoot an enemy, get a handful of points. Use your energy lasso to rein the enemy in towards you, kick them out over the edge of a cliff, rein them back in again before kicking them – again – into a nearby tornado and you'll net yourself a few more than a handful of points. It's an intuitive system and one that brings so much more to the table than we expected. Throw in the competitive angle of either trying to better your own score or – as we were doing

– passing the pad between players to try to net the biggest number at the end of one playthrough (we won, naturally) and you have a great package to mess about with when you tire of the main game.

The multiplayer mode we sampled saw a team of four players joining forces to take on waves of enemies of ever-increasing strength. A simple principle and one seen elsewhere in the world of gaming, but one with the added bonus of team combos. Whereas in single-player more points are awarded for inventive kills, in multiplayer you score far more when killing enemies together – with special bonuses for killing highlighted enemies in

us hopeful for the other multiplayer modes we weren't shown.

We still haven't seen much of *Bulletstorm*'s campaign mode, so we're still a bit confused as to how we're supposed to take the narrative angle. On one hand it looks like ridiculous, bravado-laden, misogynistic claptrap. On the other, it looks like a fine, tongue-in-cheek adventure that pokes fun at all manner of action game clichés. We're confident in the fact that – unless it's horrendous – *Bulletstorm* is a game whose experience will be hard to kill off with bad writing.

We often whine about wanting to see something new – something special – in gaming. Some think this

What could have been a very standard-looking FPS has turned into something we are very much looking forward to

the way you are instructed to do so (one lassos, one kicks, one shoots, for example). While it took us a bit to get used to this dynamic it soon became second nature to work together and rack up the points needed to pass each round. Lasso, kick, lasso, kick, electrocute, 500 points. It's looking to be a fantastic way to waste some time, and has

means we want every game to be a ball of originality with no features seen elsewhere, ever. Hopefully *Bulletstorm* will turn out to be the kind of package we want it to be – one that shows the world when we ask for something different, it doesn't necessitate fundamental change. The simple addition of a combo system and a larger-than-life attitude has made what could have been a very standard-looking FPS turn into something we are very much looking forward to.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- Echo mode could quickly become compulsive and a favourite for many.
- Simple tweaks make a standard first-person shooter fascinating.

- Fighting off waves of enemies forces you to work together as a team.
- We are still surprised by how gorgeous some of the vistas are.

READ ME

Rick Remender, writer of *Bulletstorm*, was a writer on *Dead Space*. He also illustrated album covers for bands such as NOFX and 3 Inches of Blood.

Bulletstorm is being developed by People Can Fly. Check out www.bulletstorm.com for more details.

PREVIEW



RELEASE DATE: APRIL

Portal 2

Is this a triumph?

PS3

So it's *Portal*. With a two. What's new?

The firing-two-portals-to-progress is the same but there are now physics altering gels to play with, new portable objects alongside the companion cube's return, Aperture Science Labs is over-run by nature and GLaDOS has become more sinister as she's no longer an impartial observer but seething with rage.

GLaDOS is back! Hurr... wait a minute, she's mad?

Afraid so. GLaDOS is dormant following the events of *Portal*, which see you defeating her to escape the lab. Having accidentally reawakened her in *Portal 2*, GLaDOS accuses you of killing her. As she rebuilds the facility, you're forced into various chambers, having to use portals to survive each room and eventually... we don't know. Hence why it's a preview. Ask me about co-op!

Go on then. How does co-op work?

Separately from the single-player. Because two players can control two portals at the same time, the chambers are a lot tougher. There are moments when both players will be in individual rooms, with elaborate laser redirection puzzles and co-ordination to make your brain melt. Even though you can play co-op offline using split-screen,

Valve has allowed online players to call up a split-screen view to co-ordinate properly. It's proof of how tricky things will get in co-op – the split-screen feature muscled out by online play will be brought back to help players figure out how to proceed. Presumably, it will unwittingly provide further ammunition for 'what the hell are you doing?' arguments, too. Oh, the joy.

But it's a co-op mode. That means it'll be really short, right?

The co-op half of the campaign will be about six hours, roughly the same as single-player. Given the co-op half of *Portal 2* will have its own unique plot and will be significantly tougher, it'll be worth dragging someone on your friends list away from *Black Ops* to throw yourselves through headache-inducing portals for half a day.

Anything else?

Valve chief Gabe Newell has referred to the PS3 version as 'the best console version', saving us having to beat the fanboy drum. Cheers Gabe! Maybe next time he could write the preview for us. And make the coffee. And provide the awkward banter during lunchtimes so we don't feel alone. We can but dream.

Portal 2 is being cooked up by Valve. Check out valvesoftware.com/games/portal2.html for updates.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- It's the sequel to the best-small-game-in-a-big-compilation game ever!
- Over 30 people are making *Portal 2*, compared to the original's eight.
- Puzzle game smuggled into the Realm of Cool via FPS disguise.
- Unlike in the original game, the cake will probably be true this time.

READ ME

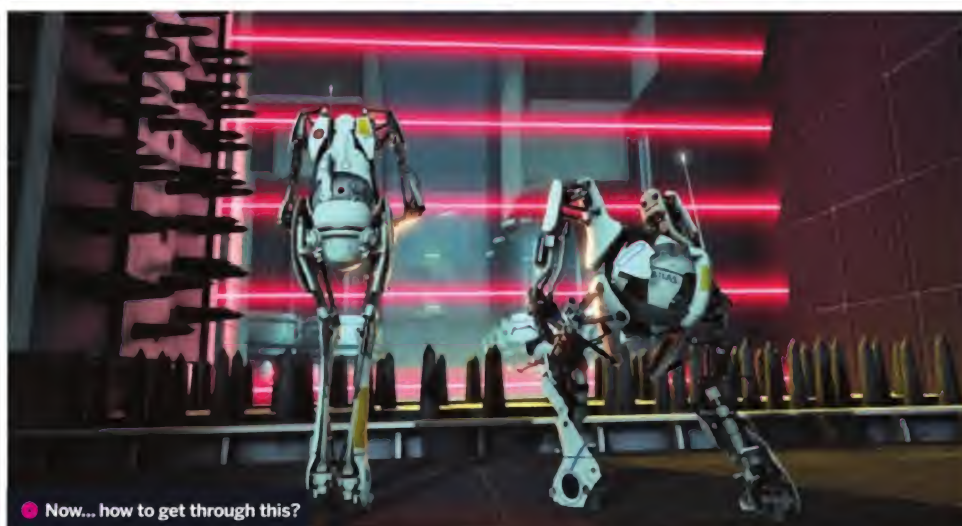
The original *Portal* ending was patched on PC to add an extra scene, showing protagonist Chell being dragged away by an unseen figure with a robotic voice.



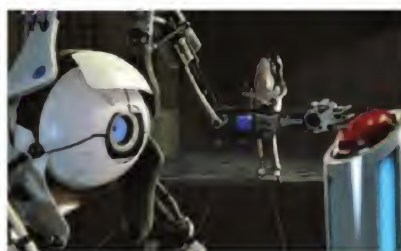
FAQ



No. We can't figure this out.



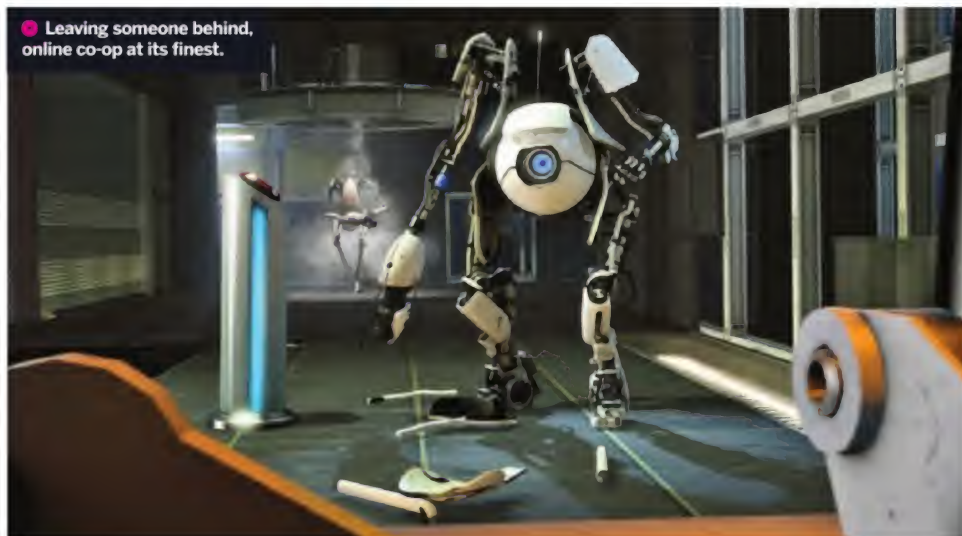
Now... how to get through this?



THE BLUE CORNER

Co-op via two comedy robots

THEY LOOK LIKE becoming gaming's first genuine comedy duo, speaking via bleeps rather than dialogue as the two robots stumble through *Portal 2*'s co-op mode. Currently known as 'blue' and 'orange', GLaDOS tries to turn the robotic friends into enemies by praising one over the other. Will there be arguments over who you get to use, though?



Leaving someone behind, online co-op at its finest.



● Mmm, sweaty.



RELEASE DATE: TBC 2011

Fight Night Champion

Kick, punch, it's all in the mind (don't kick)



A two-year break between iterations isn't something we're used to, especially not with sports games and *especially* not with EA, but it's what we've got with *Fight Night Champion*. While the framework we were presented with in our extended demo session of the game looked to be very much the *Fight Night* we know, there were a fair few elements changed, tweaked or otherwise mixed up, justifying the longer wait.

The smaller changes are too numerous to mention, but the biggest of them all is the overhaul to the punching and blocking mechanics. It's still the total punch control scheme, but there are changes to how you input punches. Arcing motions, sweeping the stick in quarter-circles and the like, have been done away with. Instead, the input relies more on stick flicks and, as we have been assured, leads to 'more punch variety'. We certainly saw this with the heavy jabs and straights from David Haye, replacing the old system that relied on haymakers for the heavy punch

roster. Blocking has also seen a few changes – it is now reflexive, meaning the computer does the hard work for the player. What this also means is that punches can be thrown from a block, though it does slow the player down.

Visual improvements are to be expected, with pugilists having muscles that tense and blubber that wobbles. Other areas spruced up include fighter entrances, which include specific ones created for boxing's big names. We didn't see much of the damage modelling – too many clean KOs – but we've been promised it's 'robust'.

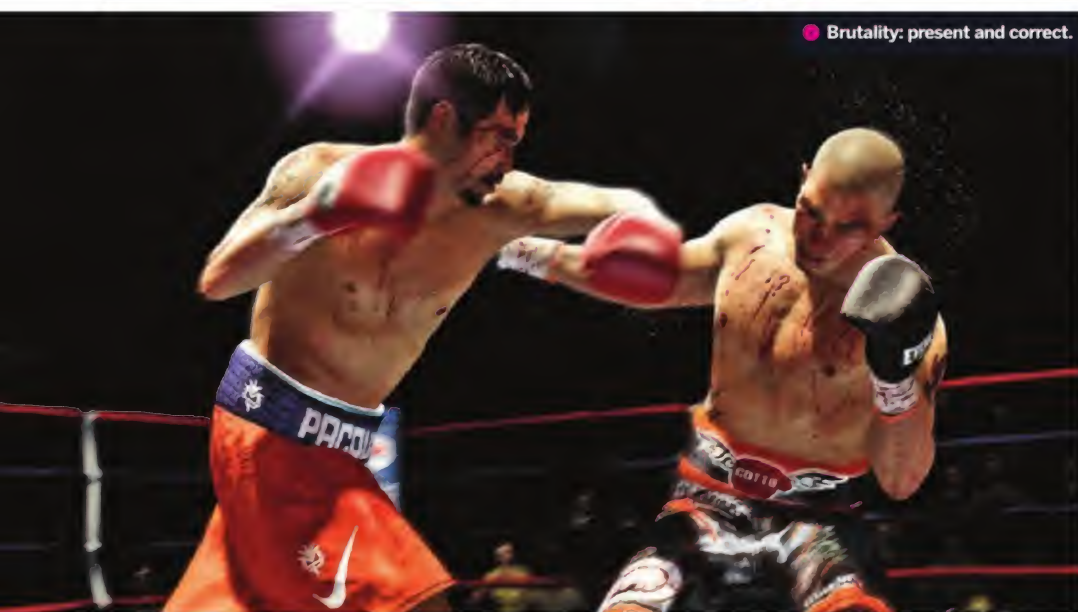
Boxing has lost some of its appeal over the last decade, and it's seen itself replaced in the hearts and minds of many fight fans by the various incarnations of MMA. Still, we do think there's a big, empty place where a boxing game would fit nicely, and we're hopeful *Fight Night Champion* will be able to fill it.

Fight Night Champion is being developed by EA Canada. Check out www.ea.com/games/fight-night-champion for more details.



● Referees now hang around the ring throughout fights. The fools.

● Brutality: present and correct.



WHAT'S YOUR LEGACY?

I coulda' been a contender
LEGACY MODE RETURNS in *Fight Night Champion*, and while we weren't told very much about it, we do know it follows the career of your boxer as he makes his way through the ranks. Training still involves mini-games, though these have been modified to make them less unfair, and the boxer development system lets you change the statistics of individual punches.

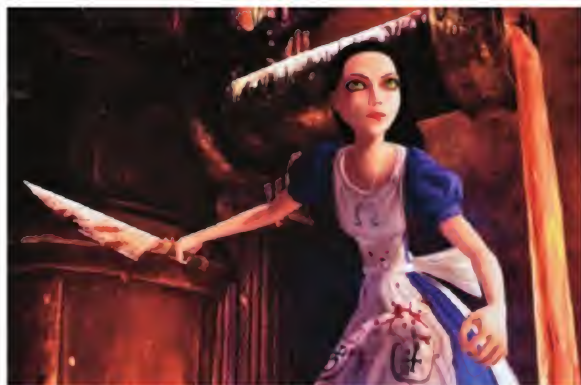
WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- It's nice to have a new boxing game to look forward to.
- There are no more annoying mini-games in the corner.
- Elements simplified, but complexity retained. Hopefully.
- Has a far more physical feeling than *Fight Night* games of old.

READ ME

No word yet on whether *Fight Night Champion* will give players the ability to play as a bear – just like in the excellent *Knockout Kings*.

THE LATEST ON... TBC-mania: now with something for everyone



ALICE: MADNESS RETURNS

Publisher: Electronic Arts Developer: Spicy Horse
ETA: Q4 2011 Format: PS3

AH, ALICE IN *Wonderland*. That magical adventure where the girl's house is torched, killing her family, the resulting trauma causing her to be admitted to a mental asylum? Well, that's how American McGee tells it. This sequel returns to a Wonderland even more twisted than before. Alice vomits blood in the trailer. It's quite gross.



JOURNEY

Publisher: Sony Developer: thatgamecompany
ETA: Q1 2011 Format: PS3

IF YOU THOUGHT *Flower* turned the rules of game design on their head, take a look at thatgamecompany's next title *Journey*. What do you do in it? You walk and look at things. Occasionally you might meet a fellow player who you can then walk with and look at things with. We couldn't be any more excited, and yes, we're serious.



BODYCOUNT

Publisher: Codemasters Developer: Codemasters
ETA: TBC 2011 Format: PS3

DOES THIS GAME still exist? It was announced last March and a PR assault followed, with designer Stuart Black saying things like "when you play our game you'll see that our boxes are f***ing operas". He left the team in July, and we've heard little since. Come on, Codemasters, we want to know more about operatic crates.



VALKYRIA CHRONICLES 3

Publisher: Sega Developer: Sega
ETA: TBC 2011 Format: PSP

THE GALLIAN ARMY returns to the PSP in an adventure that occurs during the same time frame as the original *Valkyria Chronicles*. It plays almost identically to *Valkyria Chronicles 2*, though, and so far no new gameplay mechanics have been revealed. The story promises to be darker and more adult-themed.



FROM DUST

Publisher: Ubisoft Developer: Ubisoft
ETA: TBC 2011 Format: PS3

YOU MIGHT HAVE heard the name Eric Chahi before – he was the man behind the excellent 1990 title *Another World*. *From Dust* is an entirely different proposition. It's a bit like *Populous* in that you're a god and must control an island and protect its inhabitants. We give it five minutes before we start dropping them into volcanoes.



SILENT HILL 8

Publisher: Konami Developer: Vatra Games
ETA: TBC 2011 Format: PS3

THE SILENT HILL series was in danger of losing its edge for a while there, but then Wii title *Shattered Memories* came along and gave us hope. If *Silent Hill 8* contains even a smidge of that game's good ideas then we're in for a treat. But the question is, can an untested Czech developer do the series justice?



THE 3RD BIRTHDAY

Publisher: Square Enix Developer: Square Enix
ETA: Q1 2011 Format: PSP

THIS IS THE third entry in the *Parasite Eve* series, which saw its last entry in 2000 with *Parasite Eve II*. The PSP's popularity in Japan has made it Square Enix's format of choice, with the publisher hoping to deliver the same kind of action-horror experience as that seen in *Resident Evil 5* and *Dead Space* but with an RPG twist.



METAL GEAR SOLID: RISING

Publisher: Konami Developer: Konami
ETA: 2012 Format: PS3

HOW TIMES CHANGE. Gamers were once all up in arms because they had to play as Raiden in *MGS 2*. Then *MGS 4* happened and Raiden got hard. Now fans are hankering to play as the cyborg/ninja. To be honest, if you can describe something as a cyborg/ninja chances are gamers are going to want to play as it.



MICHAEL JACKSON: THE EXPERIENCE

Publisher: Ubisoft Developer: Ubisoft
ETA: Q1 2011 Format: PS3

THERE'S NOTHING QUITE like exploiting the death of a popstar to sell a repackaged version of a popular trend. This is basically Wii title *Just Dance* with a Michael Jackson do-over, but we'll let it off because the man had some moves. However, we foresee many broken faces with players trying the *Smooth Criminal* lean move.

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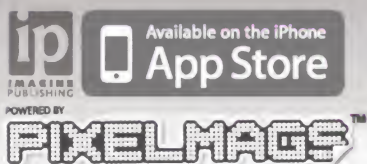
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REVIEWS

Playing bad games so you don't have to



Gavin Mackenzie

Reviewed: *Splatterhouse*

Gav was sat in his new position in the office when we approached him. That was new. What was not new, however, was the fact he was watching questionable videos on the internet and claiming it as 'work'. You can take the man out of **Play**, but... well, you know the rest. He also did some more wholesome activities, like taking his nephew for a walk around Crystal Palace Park. Unrelated.

currently playing: *FIFA 11 Ultimate Team*

on review



90 The Sly Collection PS3

A PS2 favourite arrives in HD



92 NBA Jam PS3

You'll have a ball



95 Splatterhouse PS3

Gore but not much more

the rest

94 Harry Potter And The Deathly Hallows PS3

96 EA Sports Active 2 PS3

96 Tron Evolution PS3

97 Prince Of Persia Trilogy PS3

98 Ghost Recon Predator PSP

98 Split/Second: Velocity PSP



**Luke Albigés****Reviewed:** *GT5, EA Sports Active 2, Tron*

We asked Luke what he'd done this month, but instead of an answer we got a surprised look. Luke wiped the sweat from his brow, composed himself and began to answer. It turned out the memory of his entire month had been wiped since he'd started playing *Dead Space 2*'s preview code. We all know fear has strange effects on the human mind, but to see it completely blanked? That's a new one.

currently playing: *Gran Turismo 5***Chris McMahon****Reviewed:** *Prince Of Persia Trilogy*

Adding to his entries in these sections tends to make Chris out to be some kind of hedonistic party monster, drinking and dancing his way through life without a single care in the world. We would try to argue that isn't the case, but this month Chris fell asleep. In a club. On the dancefloor. Standing up. It would appear *Play*'s influence is not having a calming effect.

currently playing: *Assassin's Creed: Brotherhood***Ryan King****Reviewed:** *Split/Second, Ghost Recon*

The new Boss In Charge, as Ryan demands we call him, has spent his early days back in Bournemouth living in what he describes as "the Bates Motel". It's not a situation anyone wants to find themselves in, feeling uncomfortable and ill at ease every time you go back to your abode, but we don't know what he's whining about. He gets meals cooked for him. That's the high life right there.

currently playing: *God Of War: Ghost Of Sparta*

RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

Gran Turismo 5

Something of a false start for this potential masterpiece



DETAILS

Publisher
Sony
Developer
Polyphony Digital
Price
£49.99
Players
1-2 (2-16 online)
Genre
Driving
Supports
1080p, 1080i, 720p,
PlayStation Network,
Downloadable
content, Sixaxis,
DualShock 3, Dolby
Digital 5.1, most
steering wheels
Age Rating
3
Website
www.gran-turismo.com



Hype is a dangerous beast. While it's true that without it a game would be lucky to outsell *Stormrise*, Sony here finds itself at the other end of the spectrum – it's created a hype demon so unfathomably powerful that even an utterly perfect game would still fail to slay it. Amid countless delays and various forms of demo, *GT5* has been punching tickets on the hype train for pretty much five years now and even though elements of Polyphony's latest racer somehow manage to live up to the massive expectations a game of this stature faces, it's those lesser areas that remind us that this was always going to be a race that Polyphony, try as it may, could never truly win.

It's both compliment and criticism to say that *Gran Turismo 5* looks and feels like a game that has been half a decade in the making. On the positive side, the extra time spent on handling and attention to detail is evident even at a cursory glance, though in other ways the elongated development period comes across as a curse. Assets finished earlier in development were always going to be rougher around the edges than those created in the twilight of production – just compare today's best-looking games to the PS3's launch lineup and you'll get the idea. And compounding this side of the argument is the fact that

Gran Turismo is, like so many Japanese-developed franchises, built upon staunchly traditionalist principles and some elements of the game were never going to move on no matter how rapidly both genre and medium evolve around it.

There's perhaps no better example of this than the clunky and convoluted menu system at work here, the layout of GT Mode following the same blueprints the series has always used. But while this setup was once an impressive way of showcasing more content than any similar game had offered, modern games tend to be far more streamlined and having

to wade through a bog of menus to get onto the grid is just not something a lot of people are willing to put up with. The fact that there's more content than ever before hidden behind the icons means that there is perhaps method to the madness, but you still can't shake the feeling that this setup isn't being used because it's the best way to do things – it's being used because this is the way *Gran Turismo* has, does and will always do things.

Flashbacks to the previous games don't stop at the menus, either. Classic courses from each iteration return, crisper and more polished than ever before. Events like the evergreen Sunday Cup comfort returning fans and make them feel immediately at home. And then there's the music, with the menus accompanied as per usual by the kind of jazz strains and lounge tunes you might expect to hear having woken up on the sofa in the middle of the night to find that someone has inexplicably left a shopping channel on the TV. Even a lot of the cars from older games make a comeback and it's this aspect in particular that has sent a lot of the game's critics into a frenzy – while the *GT5*-specific Premium cars look stunning, the significantly larger pool of Standard cars appears to be made up of recycled,

Once you get out on the track, all of GT5's issues get shunted into a layby and forgotten about

upscaled models and many of these leave a lot to be desired by comparison.

This kind of practice is hardly new to gaming (it's not like the *FIFA* team puts as much effort into the likenesses of their League Two nobodies as they do into their cover stars, for instance) but it's perhaps Polyphony's bluntness with the Standard/Premium divide that has made this such a sore point. Standard cars lack the driver's eye view that Premium models offer, plus visual and aero modifications are severely restricted. Even Photo mode acknowledges the lesser models, refusing to let you enter Standard rides into the



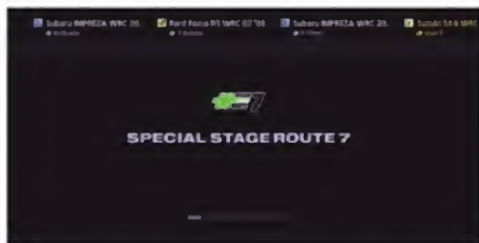
GET A LOAD OF THIS

Not going to install? You may wish to reconsider...

AS WITH SO many high-end PS3 games, *GT5*'s mighty need to abuse some 10GB of your hard drive should come as little surprise. What is curious is the chosen delivery method, which allows either an on-the-fly approach where tracks and cars get gradually installed as they're encountered or an initial batch job that sticks most of it on the HDD and takes the best part of an hour. We recommend the latter, though oddly you'll still hit minor additional installs each time something new pops up – quite why it doesn't just do the whole lot is beyond us. Still, this only happens the first time a car/track appears and dramatically cuts otherwise crippling long load times, so it's not all bad news.



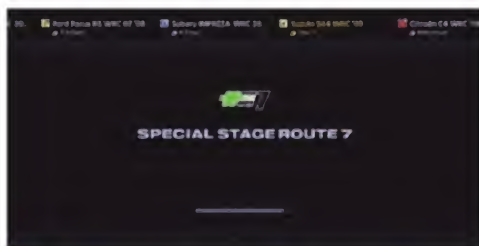
1. You've decided on a car? Good stuff. Now let's go race.



2. Wait, what's this? Perhaps you should have opted for the 'full' install at the beginning there...



3. Yep, definitely should have installed. Unless you really like progress bars. And waiting.



4. Let's hope it doesn't crash. The most recent patch seems to have addressed this issue...



5. Time to race. Next time on Loading Screen: More progress bars, more installing, more loading.



> bespoke Photo Life mode while forcefully suggesting you keep your distance if you try to get a candid snap or one in a replay. The basic models also appear to take a hit in terms of visual damage, though since even the Premium cars suffer only the most minor of scrapes from life-ending pile-ups, this is less serious an issue.

There is, however, a silver lining to this cloud and while being able to boast about having over 1,000 cars is impressive enough on its own, the nuances and variation in the handling of each make the sacrifice of having some look better than others pretty much worthwhile. Some of the inclusions are borderline pointless, sure, but most single-player events allow tens if not hundreds of different vehicles to be used, in some cases making choosing what to drive as important as actually driving it well. Tuning comes into play here as well, at its simplest being a way for more casual racers to swing the odds in their favour with a pure power boost in order to outmuscle the competition, but also offering the depth and freedom for those that know what they're doing to tweak ride height, camber, gear ratios, downforce and about two and a half billion other options with a view to squeezing every last drop of performance out of a car.

Once you get out on the track, all of *GT5*'s issues – including the sporadic visuals – get shunted into a layby and forgotten about as the sublime handling model takes centre stage, as it rightly should in a game that boasts the tagline 'The Real Driving Simulator'. Whether you're struggling to maintain control of one of the many supercars on offer, feeling loose gravel give way beneath your wheels as you battle to regain traction or hugging the tarmac in a 4WD beast, Polyphony's mechanics are almost flawless. You really start to appreciate this as your skills improve and you slowly remove all the assists one by one, each in itself leading to new challenges and concerns on your quest for podium glory and the sense of accomplishment after a perfect corner or beautifully controlled drift matches anything the genre can offer in terms of pure gaming satisfaction. Such progress in this



area makes it even more jarring that collision physics are so comparatively old-school, cars often simply bouncing off misjudged barriers or the bodywork of rival racers with a damp thud – the explosive crashes that attract many a warped mind to motorsports are simply nowhere to be seen.

Or so we thought. It didn't take long after release for people to spring to the game's defence and a bunch of videos and rumours quickly emerged that showed off significantly more impressive damage modelling than we'd seen by this point, the suggestion being that a progressive damage system was in place to ease newcomers into the game without

It's both compliment and criticism to say that Gran Turismo 5 looks and feels like a game that has been half a decade in the making

punishing them with repair costs. Now much of *GT5* comes across as eccentric but for Polyphony to include realistic damage as an unlockable feature would have to rate among the most surreal things we'd ever encountered in gaming so we put it to the test.

The results? Inconclusive. What we will say is that after several very, very careless laps in a Premium WRC car, both visual and mechanical damage were clearly present and by the end of our impromptu destruction derby, our C4 had its bumpers hanging off, a door flapping in the breeze and its top speed halved. Whether or



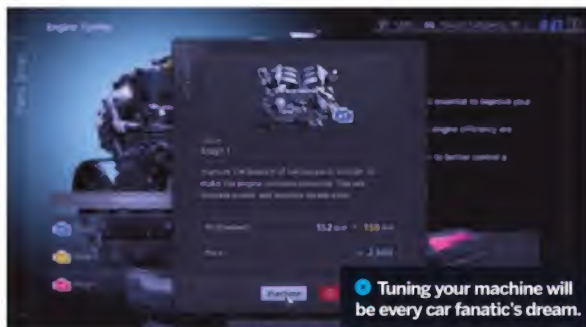


ARTISTIC LICENSE

Introducing the driving test from hell...



AH, LICENSE TESTS. We remember when you were a novelty back in the original *Gran Turismo*, putting us to task in mastering corners, braking distances and clean laps that we might enter higher level events. Today, the emphasis isn't so much on using these as a way of testing player ability before allowing access to tougher races. It's more an overall training tool and a nifty way of scoring some tidy prize cars if your skills are up to scratch. Timed events are addictive as ever, but Lap Battles frustrate more than they entertain. When you can be flunked for scraping a rival or leaving the course, it'd be nice if the AI drivers didn't make your life a living hell – we've been yelling some pretty vulgar things at the TV as they've sneaked into our way, bumped us onto the grass and flaunted the fact that they can't get disqualified but we can...



Drive anything from the latest supercars to the classics of yesteryear.



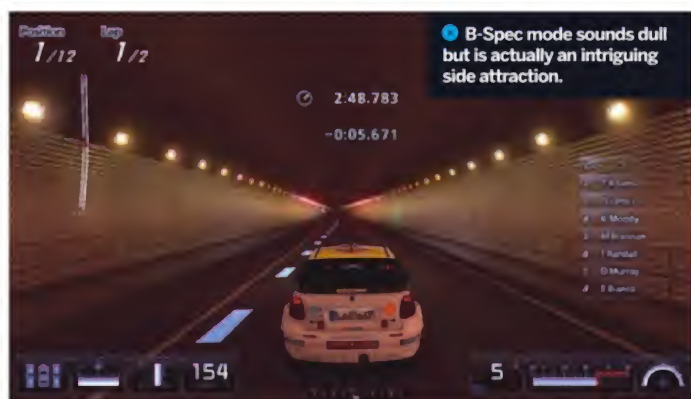
not this does indeed scale over time as you level or unlock in more advanced form later on will remain to be seen for the time being, though even if Polyphony's garage does just turn out to be improbably sturdy, the lengthy races at the tail end of GT Mode should give haphazard drivers the chance to see their precious ride fall to bits. It's nothing a quick pit stop can't miraculously fix, plus there's a Trophy in it for you if you manage to make something fall off. Yes, really.

Having stared at images and videos of the game for a number of years, it's disappointing that not all of *GT5* looks anything like as good as the pre-release media would have you believe. Stick a bunch of high-end Premiums on one of the flashier city courses and this is one of the best-looking games on PS3 so far. But especially in the early stages – when the game should be doing everything to try to hook you in – ropery-looking Standard models conspire with simplistic courses to create a very ordinary-looking racer, and one where screen tearing is prevalent. Replays as ever look jaw-droppingly beautiful almost regardless of such variables, though there's still that jump in quality if you want to go over the footage with a fine-tooth comb. Still, the fact that the engine is capable of such feats when it's not having to worry about user input does set up one of the game's more ingenious and oddly relaxing features.

B-Spec mode is, in theory, massively dull. Rather than race cars for yourself, you get >



REVIEW



> to sit in with the pit crew and bark orders at your hired wheelman, hoping that he'll get a podium finish and land you in the money. But somehow, even with just four simple commands to help control your driver's attitude, it's bizarrely engaging – as they level up and start to develop their own skills, it almost gets to the point where Polyphony is paying you to watch pretty replays. In tight events, we found ourselves actually shouting at and trying to calm the virtual pilot whereas whenever he's ahead after the first corner, we found time for a PSP break – turn-based games are recommended since even the best B-Spec drivers aren't fully autonomous and you might need to pick up the pad from time to time to remind him to put his foot down to hold the lead or to chill out lest he spin out.

Like so many of *Gran Turismo*'s features, this is something that is clearly designed for those that love cars and motorsports first and gaming second. It's a theme that runs throughout the title and arguably the series and we've no doubt that such people – some/most of whom probably own a PS3 exclusively to play this game – will be able to overlook its shortcomings and revel in the automotive splendour that is (virtually) all around them. From minor elements such as the playing up of the ownership aspect of each car with fripperies like washing them or changing oil to more clearly targeted features like the front-end theatre (which showcases both free and paid HD movie content guaranteed to get petrolheads' hearts a-racin'), it's apparent that this rare beast isn't solely targeted at gamers. In fact, you could argue that it's the car nuts that will get most out of the game, spending as they will hours setting up and fine-tuning a car for a race when the more impulsive, thrill-hungry gamer would rather just front some cash, trade up for the fast ride and get involved.



And in some respects, the game even feels like it has been put together by car enthusiasts as opposed to cutting-edge developers, online elements especially way behind the pack at the time of writing but evolving on an almost daily basis. Where you might expect to earn credits and experience for races, you're led to believe instead that victory is its own reward, but so ill-integrated an online mode simply doesn't cut it in 2010, not when Criterion and Codemasters are allowing players to continue their progression and compare times on the fly so adeptly. It's pretty cool to just sit around hot-lapping while you wait for a race to begin, but a big part of the problem here is that the archaic lobby system doesn't even tell you what you're signing up for when you join – it's just pot luck whether you end up racing karts or supercars unless the host has the forethought to advertise their intentions in the room name, and even these can be misleading.

It's perhaps this element of the game that highlights the single most damning truth about *Gran Turismo 5* – it simply isn't finished yet. What is there right now is for the most

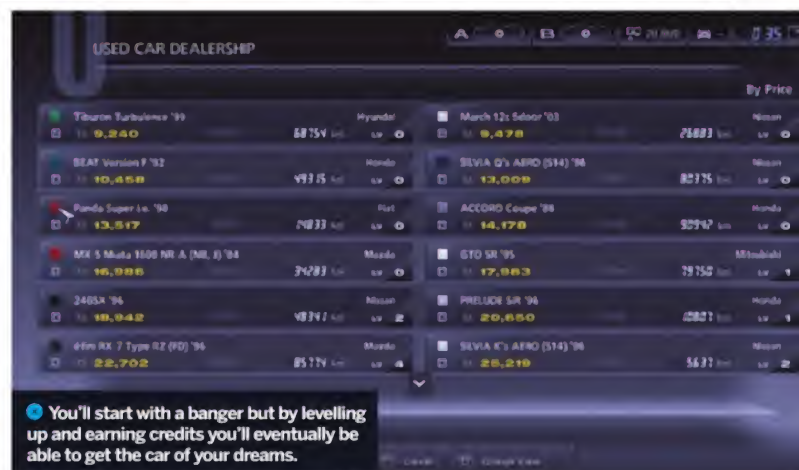
part exemplary, genre leading at its best. But often, it's not the glamorous supercars but the potholes and oil slicks that surround them that sit foremost in the mind. With updates and patches arriving with startling regularity, it's promising at least that Yamauchi and his evidently talented team are still tuning their latest creation and nothing short of perfection will do. With such constant care and attention continued, the coming weeks and months could quite easily turn what is an extremely capable, wildly eccentric and feature-packed racer into a genuinely superlative one. Let's just hope Sony doesn't call Yamauchi and his crew aboard the *Gran Turismo 6* hype train before that can happen.

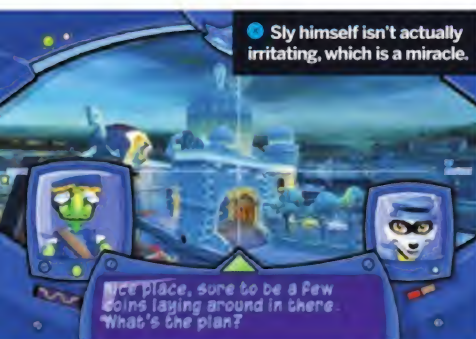
Luke Albigés

VERDICT

When it makes contact, *GT5* absolutely hits it out of the park so we hope lesser elements like online integration can be improved before Polyphony's opus strikes out.

85%





RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW



DETAILS

Publisher
Sony Computer Entertainment

Developer
Sucker Punch

Price
£29.99

Players
1-4

Genre
Platformer

Supports
720p, DualShock 3, PlayStation Move, 3D

Age Rating
7

Website
<http://bit.ly/c1T7pk>



The new-found tendency to re-release old games, tarted up in HD and at a budget price point is something we've feared might become hideously cynical at some point. Surprisingly – and *The Sly Collection* further proves this point – this hasn't yet come to be, with publishers instead giving games and series a second chance rather than trying to milk a franchise dry (discounting *God Of War*, naturally). Overall, the *Sly Cooper* series



sold just shy of 3 million copies worldwide – that's by no means a low number, but it's not enough to make Sly and his gang the household names Sucker Punch probably wishes they were. And so here we have it: all three PS2 games, re-released in HD, at a budget price point and with both 3D and Move control options.

And we welcome it with open arms.

All three games follow the same basic template: they are 3D platformers, you play as Sly Cooper (master thief and raccoon) and they all involve more sneaking, slinking and pickpocketing than you'd see in other, comparable titles. That's at the most basic level, at least, but you get the general idea.

The first game, released over here as *Sly Raccoon* back in 2002, sees the introduction of the eponymous hero and his gang – Murray the Hippo and Bentley the Turtle – on the trail

of a family heirloom, the Thievius Raccoonus. The story is hardly important, but it is worth mentioning it is in no way invasive and, surprisingly, the game is home to some decent voice acting and genuinely funny lines. Away from that is the game, surprisingly, which, while clocking in a bit short, covers all

It's odd to feel so refreshed from playing a series that began eight years ago

the necessary bases for a fun platformer. Boss battles can be utterly infuriating and there are way too many times when instant death (or an instant fail) is just around the corner, but this never really kills the experience. Be warned, though, if you're used to modern titles this may be a bit jarring, difficulty-wise – it doesn't muck about. Then, obviously, there's the visuals – once they were bold and interesting, and now they're... well, they're still

MEANWHILE...

Move like a thief

THE OFT-TOUTED inclusion of Move control is limited to a few mini-games set aside from the main three attractions. Unfortunately, they're not so great, operating instead as simple 'point-and-shoot/yank/point

some more' distractions of the briefest kind. To be fair, it would betray a massive sense of entitlement for us to demand these extra distractions – also playable by up to four players – were anything more than

forgettable demi-games. All the same, we still can't help but feel a bit cheated because of the obvious lack of quality on show and how Move integration was pushed at us as being such a wonderful thing.





Look! It's an element of difficulty! We've missed these.



The HD sheen really... shines... at times.



Boss fights range from quite annoying to utterly infuriating.



Barrel-prancing: a fine endeavour.



Giant monkey in nappy throwing its offspring at you (which turn into snowballs). Obviously.

pretty bold and interesting, especially with the HD lick of paint everything has had. It would be dumb to claim it looks as good as modern titles, but there are times – every now and then – when your brain can be tricked into thinking you're playing a PS3 game. It is a very good-looking, stylish game, as are the other two. In fact, the latter two are even better looking, but that doesn't need to be gone over repeatedly so we'll leave it at that.

The second game, *Sly 2* (2004), sees a number of changes to the formula established by the first game. The story is pretty much the same as before, not in content but in the fact it doesn't get in the way and raises a fair few smiles. The game itself allows players to control Sly's cohorts at certain points in the game, as well as seeing the action move from level-based simplicity to hub-level-based less-simplicity. It's also easier than the first game, which is both a blessing and a curse as it removes a fair amount of the challenge while

making things far less frustrating. It's another good way to waste your time, though.

Sly 3, from 2005, refines that set up by the second game not to perfection, but to Sly-perfection. It's probably the pinnacle of the series (so far), both in terms of visual quality and the game itself. Again opting for the hub-based 'job' structure, the game actually reminds us in many ways of *Assassin's Creed* – this isn't as much of a facetious statement as you might expect from us. Play it and you'll see. And we definitely recommend you play it.

There are still things that hold all three games back from being true classics, but at the same time *The Sly Collection* shows us the series has actually got better with age. It's satisfying and ultimately gratifying to play a platformer with genuine difficulty and challenge to it. While things will descend into insta-death or insta-failure too often for us to ignore, the simple fact that you actually have to pay attention in order to succeed at

all three games – something that seems to be lacking in contemporary platform titles – makes a lot of difference. It's odd to feel so refreshed from playing a series that began eight years ago and finished in 2005, but that's what *The Sly Collection* did to us. As such, it's impossible not to recommend this package as a fine collection of interesting, albeit not wholly innovative, jump-'em-ups. If HD collections continue in this vein, and continue to avoid cash-grabs, we'll be very happy here in PS3-land.

Ian Dransfield

VERDICT

The *Sly* games never were classics, but £30 for a good, solid collection of titles – all of which have appreciated over time – some fine HD visuals, extras like 3D integration and Move mini-games is an absolute steal. HAH.

84%



RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

NBA Jam



DETAILS

Publisher
EA

Developer
EA Canada

Price
£29.99

Players
1-4

Genre
Sports

Supports
1080p, 1080i,
720p, PlayStation
Network,
Downloadable
content, DualShock
3, Dolby Digital 5.1

Age Rating
3

Website
nba-jam.easports.
com

He's, well, getting uncomfortably warm...

PS3 Though the body of Midway may lie battered and festering round the back of some Chicago warehouse, EA's quick-witted licence acquisition has ensured most of its catalogue that didn't rely upon the words 'Mortal' or 'Kombat' can live on beyond their parent. Strangely, though, some ghostly possession seems to have occurred; EA's Canada studio managing not only to re-create the feel of its source material perfectly, but also the strange knack Midway had for entertaining gamers for a few hours, but no further. One might even suggest that this fresh *NBA Jam* suffers precisely because it re-creates what was required for early-Nineties arcade success so well. If one was being a ponce, naturally.

Things start pleasingly enough, though. Taking to the court for a little of the series' hallmark two-on-two action, a wash of nostalgia will flow over anyone born before 1985. The novelty value of returning exaggerated commentator Tim Kitzrow. A delightfully self-referential art style, depicting players as fully polygonal models, with two-dimensional photographed heads, as if cut from a sticker collection. The satisfying clarity with which all head-to-head duels are rendered, offering a bare minimum of skill moves and defence tougher than your average American football match. Within this correct, original context, the experience continues to shine, ageing about as well as could be expected. Teaming up with a friend in particular will highlight the simple pleasure to be found in seeking out open court space, stealing those crucial few inches from a desperate opponent, besides the obvious bombast of charging from basket to basket in a handful of seconds. Though



undeniably simple in nature, handing players the ability to construct some of basketball's most intricate moves from the very second they assume control remains a singular, if somewhat short-lived, thrill.

Lacking the labyrinthine rules on movement and bodily contact of its real-world rival, defence even packs a punch. Well an elbow, but pain is still a result. Shoving players to the ground twice in succession leads to a surrendering of the ball, leading to an odd sort of brutal ballet as one pairing stays as mobile as possible while the other flails like Mr Tickle. Such is the simplicity of offensive play, it's more often than not the ability to accurately track attacking runs that decides a game's outcome.

As a consequence of the relatively late decision to release *NBA Jam* at retail (rather than as an extra accompanying the now-canned *NBA Elite 11*), or perhaps just due to gamers' tastes in this enlightened age, the experience stretches beyond beating franchises by rote. It's

at this nexus of old-fashioned and modern game design that problems start to make themselves known. A remixed career mode breaks down the series' traditional structure, dividing the association by geographical location and turning each franchise into a level, of sorts. Each team from this point onwards features a trio of competitions with differing rules, and an almost universal lack of appeal.

Attempts to elongate the experience appear woefully unsuited to its control system

While the addition of power-ups to otherwise regular matches seems a reasonable extension upon the theme, all other mini-games take place within a half-court setting for which *NBA Jam*'s mechanics have never really been appropriate. With only three skill moves available, players lack the necessary movement options to make one-on-one play interesting, or one-on-many matches anything approaching fair. After all, only a single vaguely accurate shove or blocking leap is needed to thwart almost any attack. One size fits all AI, seeing CPU players shooting from areas of the hardwood already 'captured', among other fundamental misunderstandings of the dev's own contrived ideas, further frustrate.

The catch-up logic prevalent throughout, too – another retro revival – soon takes that inevitable step from being a quaint reminder of blowing on cartridges and being called downstairs for your tea, to a near-constant irritation. Ultimately, though, it's clear a title of this simplicity can no longer survive in a crowded sports marketplace without some reason to invest in the long-term, some non-contact sideshows – three-point





ALL ABOUT THE BLING BLING

NBA Jam rocks the added extras. Ahem...

BESIDES TWO-ON-TWO ACTION, EA Canada packs four, admittedly disappointing, mini-games into the mix. These comprise Smash, a dunk contest that awards victory to the first broken backboard. Domination, which demands various points on the court be 'captured' via the medium of scoring a basket. 21, featuring a

race between three players to that total and Elimination, offering a rather self-explanatory if utterly frustrating challenge. Smash aside, all are played from a half-court perspective, hugely outnumbering the player and making them wish for an increased roster of tricks to spice proceedings up. Sadly, the button is all you'll be getting.



shoot-outs, for example – might have provided a more palatable distraction.

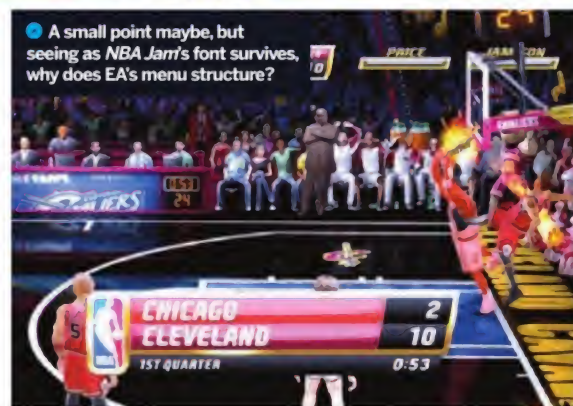
Mixed feelings remain, then. On one hand, EA should be praised for resisting the temptation to implement analogue trick stick controls, card collection mini-games or any other of its current fads. On the other, attempts to elongate the experience appear woefully unsuited to a control system of which EA was so clearly fond. Perhaps gamers should exercise caution then, in wishing to return to the successes of yesteryear. Witnessing such a succinct arcade experience, however accurately re-created, forced to perform additional tricks for players' amusement seems almost like cruelty.

Dave Shaw

VERDICT

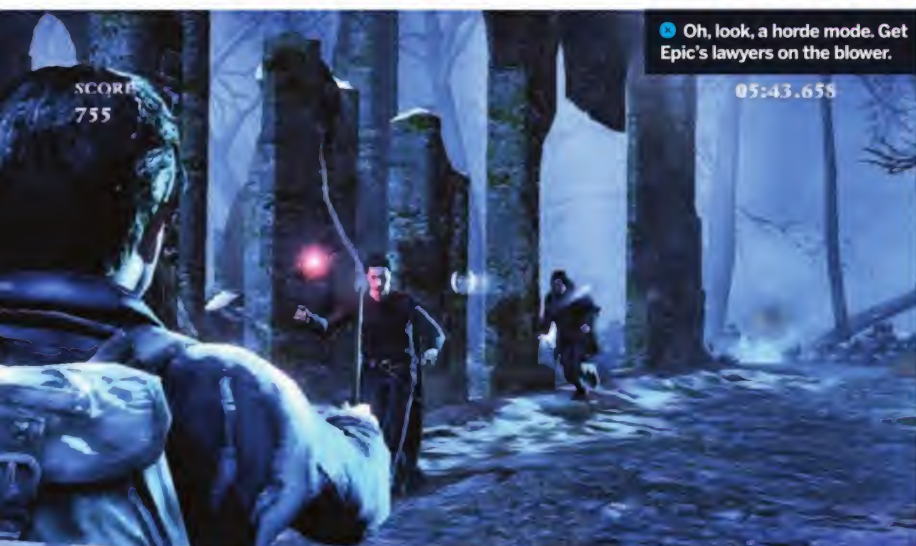
An occasionally thrilling, and lovingly reproduced, rendition of two-on-two basketball is scuppered by misguided attempts to lend the experience depth. And thus, a potentially excellent downloadable title is rendered less valuable.

68%



• Boss characters prove particularly sadistic, challenging players to defeat them while constantly at a power-up disadvantage.





RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

Harry Potter And The Deathly Hallows – Part 1

DETAILS

Publisher EA
Developer EA Bright Light
Price £49.99
Players 1-2
Genre Shoot-'em-up
Supports 720p, PlayStation Network, DualShock 3, Dolby Digital 5.1
Age Rating 12
Website <http://harrypotter.ea.com>

Behold! The magical power of the focus test

PS3 Okay, we get it. It's no secret that movie tie-ins are made to milk the cash cow until its golden teats run dry, but we've never seen a licensed title pander so badly to current trends – a safe bet you might think – yet fall so completely flat that it verges on the cusp of parody. Should our standards be placed so low that we avoid getting our hopes up with these games, or should developers of this garbage wake up and realise that, for years, even indie devs have been making better games than this on the fraction of the budget presumably allocated to poorly replicating Daniel Radcliffe's odd, stubbled face? It's not an unfair comparison to make, but we digress.

So yes, this is the game of the movie, but unless you've brushed up on all things *Potter*

recently, you'd be hard-pushed to make the connection. In short, there is little narrative exposition, meaning the paltry three-hour campaign is merely a string of levels held together with little plot coherency or explanation of what's going on and no, it's not made for the hardcore fan, it's just lazy.

What baffles most is that this is a cover shooter. We can actually visualise the thought process that went into this absurd premise, in which the developer simply looked at recent, popular games that tie in with the movie's darker, more action-based exterior. The end result was to rip off *Gears Of War*, which is a concept so ludicrous that only a marketing person could have

come up with it. Said cover rarely works as well, so when you're facing off against one of the three Death Eater enemy models, you're a sitting duck.

Potter also has a radial wheel of spells that he can unleash on enemies, but only

The end result was to rip off *Gears of War*, a ludicrous concept

Stupefy hurts foes, so the rest are pointless. He also throws potions like grenades, which, again, beggars belief. Most of the voices are impersonations, the visuals are shonky – although coat physics are excellent – stealth stages are cumbersome, as well as broken, and the level design is uninspired. These are just a few additional gripes in a morass of subpar production, and, while we've been subject to dross movie games before, in the never-ending limbo match of poor licences, this drops the bar to new depths.

Dave Cook

VERDICT

Save your £50 and explore some better games instead. We can think of no good reason to buy this, so avoid it and don't be another notch on the movie licence bedpost.

21%



RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

Splatterhouse

Not really worth splatting out on



DETAILS

Publisher
Namco Bandai
Developer
Namco Bandai
Price
£49.99
Players
1
Genre
Beat-'em-up
Supports
720p, DualShock 3,
Dolby Digital 5.1
Age Rating
18
Website
www.
splatterhousegame.
com

PS3 We don't know what 12-year-old boys do for kicks in 2010, but in our day we'd identify which of our mates' mums was happy to rent 18-rated, straight-to-VHS films for him and his friends to watch, and spend as much time at his house as humanly possible. *Nightmare On Elm Street*, *Friday The 13th*, *Hellraiser*... ah, those were the days.

It's no doubt precisely because these kinds of films held such subversive value during our young lives, and not because we remember the original games, that we initially met *Splatterhouse* with such a strong feeling of nostalgia. It's about teenagers who inadvertently dabble with dark forces resulting in gratuitous quantities of boobs and blood – a splattermaniacs idea of heaven, surely?

No, not really. The trouble is that the big difference between film and games is that films can get away with being bad on many technical levels, mainly because they only demand your attention for a couple of hours. *Splatterhouse*, for all its crude charm, just doesn't have enjoyable gameplay and so gets boring very quickly.



Boobs and blood – a splattermaniacs idea of heaven, surely?

If you are happy to do little more than mashing attack buttons and following on-screen prompts in return for copious amounts of blood and dismemberment, then you could do worse. *Fist Of The North Star: Ken's Rage*, for example. *Splatterhouse* does at least have fairly decent comic book-style presentation and the visuals are occasionally even faintly impressive. Some of the dialogue is mildly amusing if you're willing to embrace the utter cheesiness of it, and fans of extreme metal will delight in a soundtrack boasting such credible names as Cavalera Conspiracy, The Haunted and Lamb Of God. But you could always just put on an album and find something more interesting to do with your thumbs.

While boredom is the main problem, frustration rears its ugly head on a few occasions, too. Enemies don't seem to



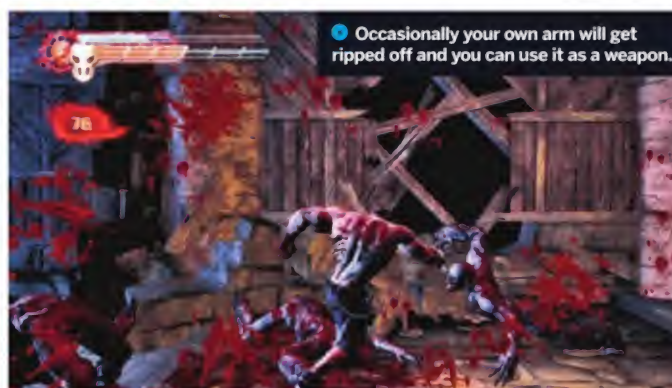
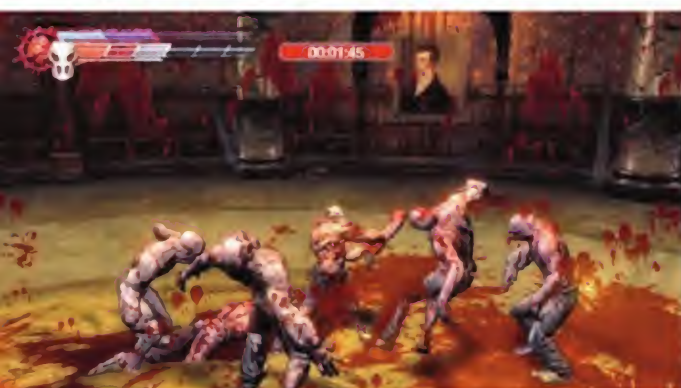
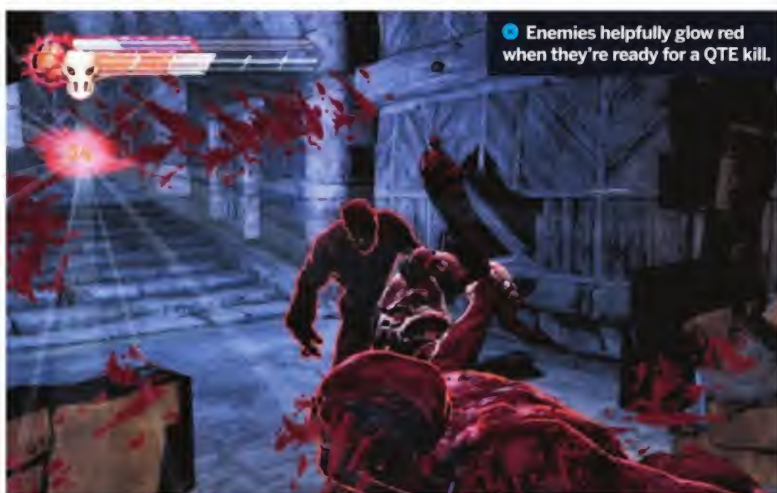
fight back much against your endless flurries of punches, but when they do they seem able to gobble up all your health very quickly, which can result in some very sudden deaths. This is particularly irritating given how awful some of the checkpoint placement is. We even died on one occasion just for failing a pointless QTE and had to start again with the boss enemy back to full health. Bloody annoying.

Gavin Mackenzie

VERDICT

It's better than the original *Splatterhouse* games, all three of which can be unlocked, but that's not saying much. Only serious gore fiends need apply and even they might doze off before the end.

58%





RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

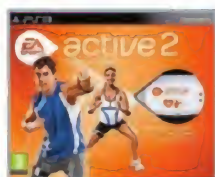
Track your progress and compare it to your friends' online.

EA Sports Active 2

Get Fit Without Mel B



Publisher EA Developer In-house Price £69.99 Players 1-2 Genre Fitness Supports 1080i, 720p, PlayStation Network, Sixaxis, DualShock 3, Dolby Digital 5.1 Age Rating 3 Website www.ea.com



As motion controllers like Move open up games consoles to a new audience,



Develop your own routines to work on specific areas.

developers are finding they can reach out to entire demographics that gaming alone can't quite appeal to. With just one console, PS3 owners can surf the net, watch HD movies, play everything from the most casual to the most hardcore games and now, the machine can even be used as a virtual fitness trainer. Sony's latest tagline for the PS3, 'it only does everything,' is actually starting to ring true.

The inflated price point includes a heart-rate monitor and a pair of motion sensors. This allows the software to roughly track your arms and legs and even though it might not be 100 per cent accurate, it's close enough that the game can give feedback on how to get more out of your workout and as your programme goes on, you'll see yourself improve in each particular exercise.

The many and varied exercises are designed to work different parts of your body, so while the preset schedules will give anyone that just wants to stay trim a great jumping off

point, those that know a little more clearly what they want to work on can develop their own routines. It's a slick package and while it's not one we'd necessarily call a game, it's still one we can comfortably recommend to anyone looking to be a bit more active.

Luke Albigés

VERDICT

With plenty of exercises, EA Sports Active 2 is as good a workout as the PS3 can offer. Online elements also allow you to track your progress and share with others.

81%

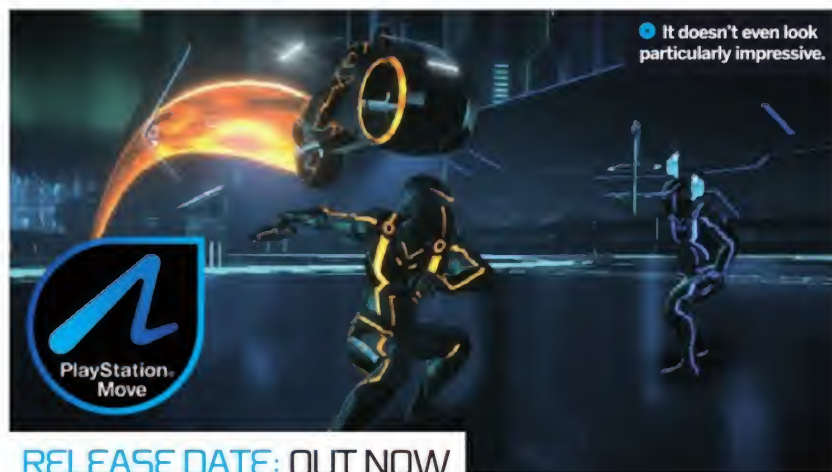


There are loads of different exercises on offer for almost every part of your body.

62 BPM



Evolution harks back to the days when movie tie-ins were utter rubbish.



It doesn't even look particularly impressive.

RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

Tron Evolution

In cyberspace, no-one can hear you groan



Publisher Disney Developer Propaganda Games Price £49.99 Players 2-10 Genre Action-Adventure Supports 1080i, 720p, PSN, DLC, Sixaxis, DualShock 3, Dolby Digital 5.1 Age Rating 12 Website disney.go.com/tron



Remember in the PS2 era where pretty much every movie tie-in was utterly dire? Well it need be a hazy memory no more, because

Propaganda Games has managed to perfectly recapture that dark age with one of the worst licensed games we've played in years.

Simultaneously managing to miss the point of both Tron and videogames in general, playing Evolution is like stepping back in time ten years and having Jordan Mechner sit you down

and make you play the very first proof of concept build of Prince Of Persia: The Sands Of Time. Broken platforming meets broken combat, plus there's the 'bonus' of vehicle sections – Light Cycles offer trial-and-error straight line obstacle courses, while Light Tanks trundle along like leftover polygons from another game and if you shoot constantly enough, you might just win.

And the issues never seem to stop. Every area looks exactly the same; you die from falling more than seven inches; AI is beyond moronic; bugs and glitches await around every turn. It's just one of the most amateurish excuses for a videogame you'll ever play and not even one comfortable in its own fiction, explaining as it does all of its elements in standard gaming terms in case you didn't realise that Version meant 'Level'. In short, Tron Evolution is an utter disgrace.

Luke Albigés

VERDICT

Celebrating all that is wrong with videogames, this is the sort of cynical cash-in we assumed the big budgets and risk associated with modern game production had eradicated.

17%



RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

Prince Of Persia Trilogy



Two Thrones's stealth kills are great fun, but get pretty repetitive.



The swords are sharp, the visuals are sharper



The most interesting aspect of this excellent package isn't the fact that it upscales one brilliant game and two good ones to 720p, nor that it also applies a 3D overlay to the action, but that each title is just as playable today as it was in its year of release. 2003's *Prince Of Persia: The Sands Of Time* remains a fantastically fun experience through and through. It's an experience as evergreen as *Tomb Raider* or *Mario 64*.

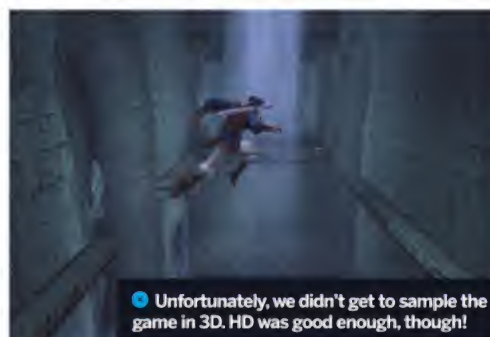
Yes, the character models are constructed of cuboid blocks and the environments look like a collection of rectangles, but these were playgrounds first and art second – you can feel the level design as you play, each new room built to ensure a fast, steady flow to the platforming that never breaks pace. It's still some of the greatest level design going, and you can see the influences *Sands Of Time* had on titles like *Uncharted* and *Assassin's Creed* as you hop, shimmy and wall run your way through the city of Azad.



Ah, the *Sands Of Time*. Simple, and yet wonderful.



The cut-scenes are still SD, as this gratuitous shot of a fuzzy bottom proves.



Unfortunately, we didn't get to sample the game in 3D. HD was good enough, though!

The HD sheen is just a bonus. These games would be just as enjoyable without it

The second most interesting feature is the ability to play the three original *POP* games side by side, and see how Ubisoft Montreal struggled to re-create that same magic of the original. *The Warrior Within* took a darker approach, turning the Prince into an angsty emo and replacing the haunting sounds of Arabian ouds and neys with a crunchy guitar soundtrack. A focus on combo-based, dual-weapon combat further overcomplicated a game that was originally enjoyable because of its simplicity, not in spite of it.

In *The Two Thrones* Ubisoft attempted a mix of its first two games – sticking with the deeper combat mechanics and introducing an element of stealth in Speed Kills, but presenting them through a filter of rich gold and red instead of the drab greys of *Warrior Within*. It was a return to that happier, more

Aladdin-esque approach to character and story personified by *Sands Of Time*.

It's easy to see when playing these games why Disney saw such potential for a film – the characters, the look, even the gameplay all contain a kind of magic that we see far too rarely in the videogame industry. It's true that the second two games never attained the same giddy heights of the original, but they're still great games in their own right. The crisp, HD sheen and 3D that's been applied is just a bonus. These games would be just as enjoyable without it.

Chris McMahon

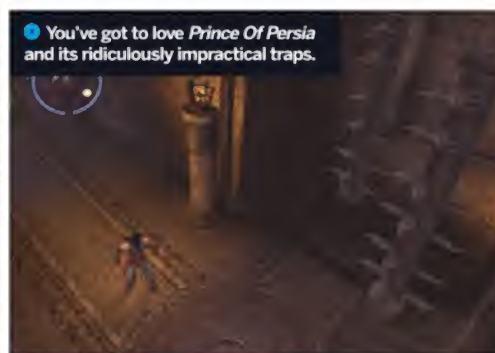
VERDICT

The new visuals are crisp, clean and sharp, with better colour definition showing off the beautiful art direction. This pack also serves as a reminder of how brilliant *Sands Of Time* was. Its two predecessors feel lacking when placed in such close proximity to their superior antecedent.

88%



Warrior Within's opening sets the tone – moody, dark and bleak.



You've got to love *Prince Of Persia* and its ridiculously impractical traps.

In this series



Prince Of Persia Issue 174
The series reboot lost the franchise more fans than it gained. 83%



DETAILS

Publisher Ubisoft
Developer Ubisoft
Price £24.99
Players 1-3
Genre Strategy
Supports Ad-hoc Wi-Fi
Multiplayer Multiplayer
Age Rating 16
Website <http://ghostrecon.ubi.com/>



RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

The Ghost Recon series deserved better than Predator.

Ghost Recon Predator

The future's bright, the future's badly animated



The reviewing process goes like this. You play a game. An hour later, you have a rough score in mind. Score goes up or down depending on how things play out. It's not an incredibly scientific process but games aren't wonky enough to stretch it to breaking point. *Ghost Recon Predator*, however...

It's the best and worst of PSP gaming in a single UMD

When it's good, it's really good. As is standard *Ghost Recon* practice, you spend half your time planning and the rest executing. You scout with your squad of three, assess threats and eliminate them with minimum fuss. Failure

is just as much your own disappointment when a gunfight breaks out as it is your squad snuffing it and *Predator* conveys that sense of perfectionism. The controls just about survive the absence of a second analogue hub when things are calm and it ticks along nicely.

When it's bad, it's really bad. Any good faith instilled by the slick opening movie is lost as a talking statue delivers your first mission. Before you can ask yourself why his lips aren't moving, off he shuffles, taking all two frames of animation with him. The terrain looks like solidified vomit, the controls fall apart as soon as a mission goes wrong and the experience is just too clumsy to fit into the tidy confines of PSP. It's the best and worst of PSP gaming in



Animation is poor, with some characters looking a lot like Lego men.

a single UMD that doesn't do the *Ghost Recon* name justice. A missed opportunity.

Ryan King

VERDICT

Either incredible fun or loathsome mess, depending which bit you're on. Close your eyes during the worst bits and it's the best game ever. Open them at the wrong time and it's the worst game ever.

60%



DETAILS

Publisher Disney
Developer Black Rock Studios
Price £29.99
Players 1-2
Genre Racing
Supports Ad-hoc Wi-Fi
Multiplayer Multiplayer
Age Rating 7
Website www.disney.co.uk/split-second-velocity

RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

Split/Second: Velocity

Online dating comes to the racing genre!



The box for *Split/Second* on PSP contains shots of the PlayStation 3 version. Just to repeat, so we're clear on this – that's PS3 shots on the PSP box. It's weird but not entirely unexpected. Adventures with online dating have shown that Kerry, 19, Southampton will actually end up being

It's just an excuse for a rollercoaster of graphical orgasms

Waynetta, late-forties, the local chip shop, so it's a given that lesser beauties will dress themselves up with flattering photos.

Still, as Waynetta would say, looks aren't everything. Yet in *Split/Second's* case... they kind of are everything. It falls in the *Burnout* half of the Great Racing Game Divide where success is best accomplished by smashing your opposition out of commission rather than by slick driving. Set off 'Power-Plays' to send towers crashing, flaming cars barrelling across the track, and other obstacles in motion to get other drivers to crash.

It's a perfectly decent racer. It has turning, accelerating, overtaking and everything else that makes a racing game a racing game. Yet



Use Power-Plays to get ahead.



The good looks of the PS3 version are nowhere to be seen.



what pushed it over the top on PS3 is that it's really an excuse for a rollercoaster of graphical orgasms. On PSP, it's a catalogue of brown smudgy messes that leave you wondering what you've just managed to scrape past.

Simply put, it doesn't fizz or shine like its PS3 brother, leaving *Split/Second* as a competent if strangely impotent racer. Try telling that to Kerry, 19, Southampton without leaving her disappointed.

Ryan King

VERDICT

With the ugly graphics robbing *Split/Second: Velocity's* explosive set-pieces of their impact, it's left to the racing to hold things together. It does a good job but you're always aware of its unfulfilled potential.

71%

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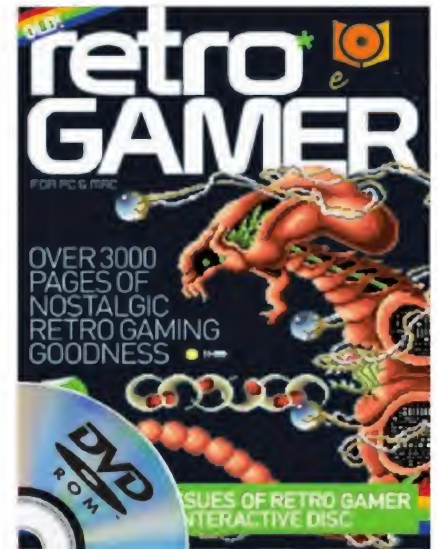
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DETAILS

Publisher
EA
Developer
DICE
Release Date
Out now
Price
£9.99
Players
1-24
Genre
First-person shooter
Supports
720p, Downloadable content, Dolby Digital 5.1

Battlefield Bad Company 2: Vietnam ^{DLC}

I love the smell of DLC in the morning...

We promise that above standfirst will be the only reference to *Apocalypse Now* we put in this review. With that out of the way, let's begin: *BFBC2: Vietnam* is a sizeable chunk of DLC for the original *Bad Company 2*. It transports the game world to the Vietnam War and comes complete with dozens of era-appropriate weapons, a selection of new vehicles, new maps and

people online to the sounds of music enjoyed by the Nazis, there are dozens of other songs specific to the era. It's a small touch, but it helps the atmosphere no end.

There are no new game modes in Vietnam, which is a bit of a letdown, but those carried over from the original game are still more than enough fun on their own. Throw in the liberal use of map-changing napalm and you have yourselves a winner in anyone's book.

Unless you're on the NLF side.

This is very much *Bad Company 2* online by the numbers,

Bad Company 2 is the best 'other' FPS currently doing the rounds online.

— probably most importantly of all — a load of music of the era. Driving a tank while *Ride Of The Valkyries* blares out of the radio is an oddly emboldening experience, even with the rather questionable connotations associated with Wagner's piece. Though that's probably just because it's a fantastic piece of music. And if you don't want to ride around shooting

which is to say it's the best 'other' FPS currently doing the rounds online. While there is a space in everyone's life for both *Bad Company 2* and *Call Of Duty*, most people will likely choose one or the other. If you've already made your choice, *Vietnam* won't be likely to influence it any more. The **Play** team is still split on the issue, which causes a lot of

resentment to bubble under the surface, and we still haven't been able to put our finger on the definitive online experience — *BFBC2* (and now *Vietnam*) or *COD* (*MW2* or *Black Ops*). There's no denying, though, that *Vietnam* is a decent addition to an already wonderful game. It's balanced, suitably epic when it needs to be, intense and — most importantly — fun. If you've already clocked up countless hours in the standard online then for a tenner you're going to get yourself a few dozen more hours out of this DLC. And at least it will make the wait for *Battlefield 3* a bit easier.

Ian Dransfield

VERDICT

More of a graphical overhaul than anything really affecting the core game, but in the case of *Bad Company 2* that's no bad thing. *Vietnam* makes the experience of online war infinitely cooler, though obviously a lot more horrific.

★★★★★

DETAILS Publisher Ubisoft Developer Ubisoft Montreal Release Date Out Now Price £49.99 Players 1-8 Genre Action-Adventure Supports 1080i, 720p, Downloadable content, Sixaxis, Dolby Digital 5.1

Assassin's Creed: Brotherhood

GAME

Hide and seek with a twist

Brotherhood's multiplayer, in concept, is an intriguing proposition. Explained away by the series' narrative – all the players are inductees into Abstergo's Animus training program – players are placed in a small cut of open world. Everyone's an assassin, and everyone has a mission – kill the other players.

Simple enough, but the idea is justified with a clever twist – all maps are populated with a variety of NPCs that look identical to the player avatars. This means that you can't identify your

target unless they break from normal movement patterns, and that goes for you, too. You're also a target, meaning the entire time you're searching for your mark, someone's also looking for you.

What should follow is a tense game of cat-and-mouse; a multiplayer game that encourages tactics and promotes stealthy play. And when it works this is exactly what you get – a feedback loop of hunt, assassinate and escape. But that's *when* it works. More often than not *Brotherhood's* loop is broken by players uninterested in following the rules. They'll run and bound across rooftops, sprint across levels to their target, and generally go about their task as if they're playing a team deathmatch.

There are some nice ideas here but the moments when *Brotherhood* all comes together are too few and too far between. There's a good game here, screaming to get out. But like so many online titles it rarely gets the chance to emerge due to the impatience and bloodlust of its players.

Chris McMahon

VERDICT

The idea is an excellent one but it rarely reaches its full potential.

★★★★★



Each of the assassins has their own weapon, such as the Courtesan's fan or the Doctor's syringe.

NEED FOR SPEED: HOT PURSUIT

Criterion continues its winning streak

Publisher EA Developer Criterion Price £49.99 Players 1-8 Genre Racing

We made a big deal about *Need For Speed: Hot Pursuit's* Autolog system, when we reviewed the game in issue 199, and how it aids in that whole 'asynchronous multiplayer' thing.

Well, don't think that means Criterion has forgotten about online – it's here in force. Players can take on standard races or pursuits in any combination they so choose – seven cops against one racer, for example.

It's good to know that once you get bored of failing to beat your friends' times through the Autolog system you can always fall back on good old-fashioned



'losing to them directly'. It's nowhere near as revolutionary as the excellent Autolog, but then it doesn't really need to be – good, solid fun. **ID**

★★★★★

JAMES BOND: BLOOD STONE

A bizarre creation

Publisher Activision Developer Bizarre Creations Price £49.99 Players 1-8 Genre Action

Two whole modes. That's right, two! You lucky devils. James Bond fights, shoots, drives, escapes, brawls, swims, sneaks and does all that spy stuff that you would expect him to do yet, apparently, all that exhaustive checklist boils down to is Team Deathmatch and an objective-type-game-mode-thing that nobody bothers playing.

Blood Stone's single-player mode was bland and unsatisfying, which extends to the multiplayer side of things except you don't even have the satisfaction of easy-to-unlock Trophies any more either. Boo.

Quantum Of Solace still stands as the best multiplayer *James Bond* game and



that hardly set the world of licensed first-person shooters alight. This might be as smooth as butter online but it's also the very definition of token effort. **RK**

★★★★★

DEF JAM: RAPSTAR

Battle for supremacy

Publisher Konami Developer 4mm Price £49.99 Players 1-2 Genre Rapping

Bless them for trying. In an attempt to push beyond its *SingStar*-with-rap label, Def Jam has opened up a whole host of online options to foster the community aspect. Problem is that it feels like a weird, sprawling, unfocused effort. You form battle crews to engage in score contests (the family friendly equivalent of postcode wars), upload and review other players' videos... everything works as it should and there's no faulting the effort on show. It just feels slightly redundant unless you already had the motivation and doesn't do enough to draw in the bored or those having a potter about the menus. With a slicker interface



and polished structure, it would have gone a long way. As it is, though, this feels more like a cute extra for *Def Jam Rapstar* rather than an essential component. **RK**

★★★★★

DETAILS

Publisher
Electronic Arts
Developer
EA Canada
Release Date
Out Now
Price
Free
Players
1-2
Genre
Sports

FIFA 11: Ultimate Team^{DLC}

Another year and we're still missing our precious sticker book

WE LOVE FIFA *Ultimate Team*, mainly because it combines two of our favourite passions: card collecting and football. We weren't too impressed with last year's effort, however, because the push towards microtransactions somehow killed a lot of the game's fun.

Fortunately, while this necessary evil still exists, EA allows you to play against your friends, meaning you won't have to go online and play people who have built their teams up with hard-earned cash.

Indeed, it makes a huge difference now being able to play a game and knowing that you're not going to be immediately outclassed by your opponent. Being able to play friends is

a huge improvement to *Ultimate Team*, so it's rather irksome that you can't easily trade cards with your friends. It would have been a wonderful throwback to the days of Panini stickers. One thing

we're also looking forward to is the return to the original *Ultimate Team*'s card album. There was something satisfying about being able to see what trades you needed to finish off a page and it's annoying that EA has dropped it.

It's going to be a minor issue for many, though, and the bottom line is that *Ultimate Team* does what it does and does it very well. The focus on microtransactions continues, but that's understandable if gamers are constantly using them. We're just glad that the ability to play a fair game is now in place. Oh, and being able to fiddle around with your squad online via EA.com is a fantastic idea and shows EA listens to its user base.

Lag is occasionally an issue, and seems to crop up more in *UT* than in normal matches, but there's no denying that this remains an excellent addition to everyone's favourite football game. **DJ**

VERDICT

There's still no sticker book and lag does annoy, but being able to play a friend is a huge bonus to *Ultimate Team*. ★★★★★



● Playing mates adds a great deal to the experience.

Pac-Man Championship Edition DX^{GAME}

If Snake and Pac-Man had a baby

PAC-MAN CHAMPIONSHIP *Edition* was a huge success on Xbox Live Arcade, giving new players an excellent new score attack game and revitalising a classic game to boot.

The sequel is now here and it not only takes the core gameplay in fresh and exciting new directions, but it also proves that *Pac-Man* remains one of gaming's most enduring icons.

As with the original *Championship Edition*, the aim of *Pac-Man DX* is to score as many points as possible within a strict time limit.



DETAILS

Publisher
2K Games
Developer
2K Czech
Release Date
Out Now
Price
£6.29
Players
1
Genre
Adventure

Mafia II: Joe's Adventures^{DLC}

If only all goodfellas had adventures like this

FROM THE MOMENT that *Mafia II*'s newest piece of downloadable content kicks off you know that it's going to be a lot of fun. Kicking off with Vito getting nabbed by the feds, Joe soon finds himself chasing after a number of leads before eventually ending someone's life at a frozen lake house. He's soon forced to leave the country, however, after learning he was getting set up and this new piece of DLC does a great job of filling in the blanks that concerned Joe's switch of families in the original game.

Mafia II: Joe's Adventures is an impressive and immersive piece of DLC that, unlike similar efforts, gives you a genuine amount of playing

time for your hard-earned cash. Play this on a medium or higher difficulty setting and you're going to get a good eight hours of varied gameplay that's chock full of excellent characters, genuinely enjoyable



missions and a surprisingly adult and intelligent storyline. Completed missions can be replayed in order to place higher on the online leaderboards, and it works beautifully thanks to the arcade-like nature of many of the game's actual missions.

What doesn't work so well are the driving levels, with the many vehicles still feeling as skittish and difficult to control as they did in the original game. It's only a minor criticism, however, because this remains an excellent piece of DLC that no fan of the original game should miss out on. **DJ**

VERDICT

The driving still annoys, but the structure, storyline and characters of *Joe's Adventures* makes it a joy to play. ★★★★★



● The soundtrack is truly amazing and makes us feel like a made man.

Castle Crashers^{GAME}

Better late than never

TALK ABOUT BEING late to the party. *Castle Crashers*, from developer The Behemoth, first appeared on Xbox Live Arcade all the way back in August 2008 – that's over two long years ago. So what have The Behemoth done in the meantime? Well, quite a lot as it happens.

Castle Crashers got a lot of support on XBLA in the form of two hefty pieces of DLC. Both of those packs are included within this PS3 release, meaning you get an additional four characters, two new animal orbs and five new weapons. Quite a decent little bundle, we're sure you'll agree.

As with *Turtles* and the recently released *Scott Pilgrim Vs the World*, *Castle Crashers*



Store Reviews

それはどのようによかったか。

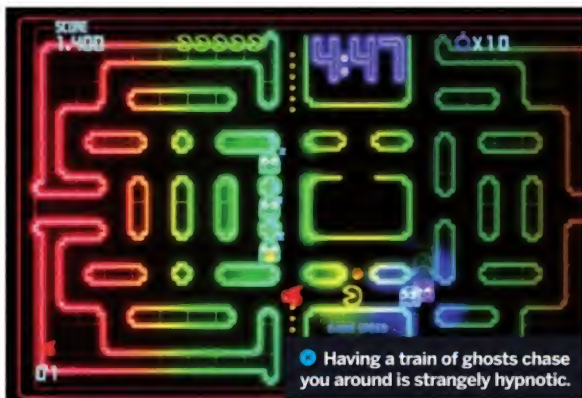
Store Roundup

DETAILS

Publisher Namco Bandai Developer In-House Release Date Out Now Price £7.99
Players 1 Genre Arcade

Lives are no longer important, so you can simply rely on your strategy instead and you are going to need a good one in order to top the online leaderboards.

In *Pac-Man Championship Edition DX* there are ghosts, lots and lots of ghosts. While you'll initially be chased by one of them, the other ghosts will lay sleeping, seemingly unaware of your presence. Get close to them, however, and the ghosts will wake up and chase you in a snake-like line. You've then got a choice. Turn on them as soon as you find a power pill, or try to awake as many of the translucent enemies as you can in the hope of netting even more points once you finally chomp down on a power pill. It's a fantastic risk-and-reward system as if you let the train of ghosts get too long you're liable to get trapped by them. Get it right, however, and it's possible to net an insane amount of points.



Having a train of ghosts chase you around is strangely hypnotic.

Yes, it's simple, but the rush of beating your high score shouldn't be ignored and with plenty of new levels to unlock this will keep you going for absolutely ages. A truly fantastic arcade experience that builds effortlessly on the Xbox Live Arcade original and gives PSN owners a score attack game to really sink their teeth into. **DJ**

VERDICT

Bold, bright and insanely addictive, Namco Bandai's new arcade game is an essential addition to any PSN library. **91%**

DETAILS

Publisher The Behemoth Developer In-House Release Date Out Now Price £10.99
Players 1-4 Genre Scrolling Fighter



Don't be put off by the cartoony visuals, this is one gory little game.

is a four-player scrolling fighter. Unlike *Scott Pilgrim*, however, this one actually supports online play, greatly adding to its long-term appeal. The online Xbox code was a nightmare, so it's good to see that the PSN offering suffers from no such problems, allowing you to get stuck in to the good old-fashioned – and slightly repetitive – gameplay.

There are a huge amount of levels to unlock, characters have unique magical abilities that can be enhanced through the collection of experience points

and it's even possible to unlock animal helpers. Yes, it gets a little repetitive, but it's a hell of a lot of fun when playing with friends. The price tag is certainly rather hefty, but you are getting a lot of game for your cash. It's just a shame we had to wait so long. **DJ**

VERDICT

It's a little pricey, but the gameplay is fast and furious, it's a blast online and it comes with all the Xbox 360's DLC. **88%**

CRAZY TAXI GAME

11 years on and Sega's classic racer is still crazy

Publisher Sega Developer In-House Price £7.99 Players 1 Genre Arcade

CRAZY

TAXI IS still a superb score-attack game, especially now it has online leaderboards. Simply pick up a passenger and deliver them to their destination in the required time limit. It's a great concept that still delivers thanks to a clever city layout, fast and furious gameplay and the fact that it's just so much fun. Yes, the pop-up and erratic frame rate will annoy some, but look beneath the ageing aesthetics and you'll discover an excellent little racer that just keeps on giving. **80%**



BLACKLIGHT TANGO DOWN GAME

Better than Black Ops? Of course not

Publisher Ignition Entertainment Developer Zombie Studios Price £9.99 Players 1-16 Genre First-person shooter

BLACKLIGHT TANGO DOWN

is an online-only multiplayer that's been released in the same window as *Black Ops* and *Medal Of Honor*. Sadly, despite its impressive range of customisation options, this is a pretty bland shooter. There's no denying that the retro-styled visuals are smart, but the presentation throughout is weak, the gameplay is bland as hell and the varied play modes have all been seen a hundred times before. Disappointing. **64%**



WORMS 2 ARMAGEDDON BATTLE PACK DLC

The worms go to war again

Publisher Team17 Developer In-House Price £3.19 Players 1-4 Genre Strategy

IT MAY NOT offer as many landscapes as the Xbox version but

it remains a great piece of DLC. For just a few pounds you get access to six new weapons, ten new forts, 30 additional single-player levels and a couple of new modes, Warzone and Body Count. The latter is particularly good as it's basically your lone worm against a never-ending supply of enemies. It's not really doing anything new, but the little tweaks here really add to what is an already great game. A top piece of DLC. **★★★★★**



CRESCENT PALE MIST GAME

What the hell is going on here?

Publisher Sony Online Entertainment Developer Rockin' Android Price £3.99 Players 1 Genre Arcade

THIS DOUJIN-BASED platformer won't be to everyone's

tastes, which is a pity, as it's pretty decent. Taking control of a young witch you must leap in and out of the screen, taking out swarms of enemies and using the titular Pale Mist. Reach the end of a stage and it turns into a shoot-'em-up with rock-hard bosses. It's a relentless game that's only really let down by occasionally stodgy controls and its insane difficulty level. **70%**



ASSASSIN'S CREED BROTHERHOOD COPERNICUS MISSIONS DLC

A brotherhood you won't want to leave

Publisher Ubisoft Developer Ubisoft Montreal Price Free Players 1 Genre Adventure

BEST SEEN

AS a set of side missions, *Copernicus Conspiracy* has Ezio protecting the famous astronomer from a deadly plot against him. The available missions range from protection to assassination jobs and while there's nothing here that's not already available in the main game, it's all tied together by a decent storyline. It won't take you too long to burn through, but considering this is exclusive and, most importantly, free, it's definitely worth downloading. **★★★★★**



SCOTT PILGRIM VS THE WORLD: KNIVES CHAU ADD-ON PACK DLC

Scott Pilgrim Vs the online injustice

Publisher Ubisoft Developer Ubisoft Montreal/Ubisoft Chengdu Price £1.59 Players 1-4 Genre Scrolling fighter

IF UBISOFT WANTED to get on our good sides it could have

simply concentrated on making this fun brawler online. Instead we're treated to the addition of a new character, Scott's 17-year-old girlfriend Knives Chau, and two new gameplay modes: Arena and Dodgeball. None of it really adds much to the core game, but it's a nice touch all the same. Now give us some proper online play please. **★★★★★**





Pilgrim's adversaries are one of the film's many highlights.

Edgar Wright effortlessly captures the spirit of the original graphic novels.



Scott Pilgrim Vs The World



DETAILS

Price

£24.99

Sound

DTS-HD Master

Audio 5.1

Director

Edgar Wright

Starring

Michael Cera, Mary

Elizabeth Winstead,

Ellen Wong

Scott Pilgrim faces his biggest fight yet... the consumer

Scott Pilgrim Vs The World was a disaster at the box office, failing to claw back the \$60 million it cost to make. This is a real tragedy, for it was one of the most entertaining films of 2010 thanks to a killer soundtrack, great performances from its hip, young cast and a comic-book styling that even Marvel hasn't been able to re-create on screen. Hopefully its release on Blu-ray will allow it to find the audience it always deserved.

Based on Bryan Lee O'Malley's wonderful graphic novels, this is a surprisingly excellent offering from the director of *Shaun Of The Dead* and *Hot Fuzz*, and in many ways feels like a big-budget version of his hit TV show *Spaced*. Scott Pilgrim is a loveable loser who spends his days dreaming of making it big with his band Sex Bob-omb and enjoying the company of his girlfriend Knives Chau. Everything changes, however, when he falls for Ramona Flowers and must defeat her seven evil exes in order to win her hand.

It's as nutty as it sounds, but some sharp writing, dazzling editing and a genuinely believable cast is able to pull the whole crazy mess together and as a result it's one of the most inventive and entertaining movies around. While Michael Cera excels as Pilgrim, it's Kieran Culkin as his gay roommate Wallace Wells and the exes who steal the show. Chief among them is Brandon Routh as a psychic vegan bass player, Chris Evans as an arrogant skateboarder turned movie star and Jason Schwartzman as the devious Gideon Graves.

With genuinely engaging banter, blistering fight scenes and a fantastic style, this is a wonderful ode to comics and videogames and what it meant to be a teenager.

A fantastic film deserves an excellent array of extras and this Blu-ray does not disappoint. Edgar Wright is well known for his attention to detail and *Scott Pilgrim* is packed with four commentaries that cover all aspects of the filming process, nearly 30 minutes of deleted scenes and an in-depth look at the film's

production, blogs, alternative edits and much, much more.

Transfer-wise it's something of a disappointment, for while the detail is very strong in places, it lacks the visual pop that it boasted on cinema screens. It still looks fantastic, but it's not quite up to the standards we were expecting. Luckily the audio is much stronger thanks to a DTS-HD Master Audio soundtrack that is quite simply amazing.

Scott Pilgrim is a great film, which has been given a truly outstanding Blu-ray presentation. Buy it immediately and ensure that this gets the acclaim that it actually deserves.

Darran Jones

VERDICT

Yes, it's silly, yes, it's over the top, but it's also one of the most charming movies around, and now it has a presentation that really does it justice. Do not miss *Scott Pilgrim* under any circumstances.

RATING: ★★★★★

Plus all
the latest
hardware
reviews

Blu-ray Reviews

それはどのようによかったか。

Piranha 3D

PRICE: £24.99

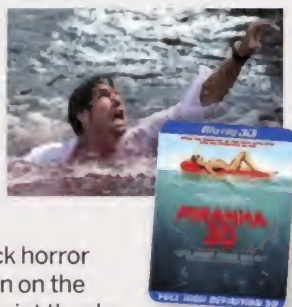
SOUND: DTS-HD Master Audio 5.1

DIRECTOR: Alexandre Aja

STARRING: Ving Rhames, Kelly Brook, Elisabeth Shue

YES, IT'S AN amazingly schlock horror movie, but the cast are clearly in on the joke. As a result *Piranha 3D* is a riot thanks to the cheesy acting, copious amounts of bare female flesh and some truly gory death scenes. Grab some popcorn and simply revel in its sheer ridiculousness. **DJ**

RATING: ★★★★★



The Girl Who Played With Fire

PRICE: £19.99

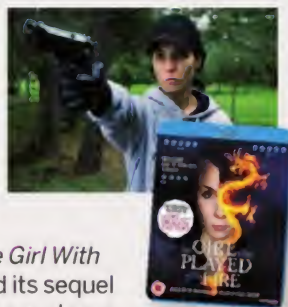
SOUND: Dolby Digital 5.1

DIRECTOR: Daniel Alfredson

STARRING: Noomi Rapace, Michael Nyqvist, Lena Endre

AFTER BEING WOWED by *The Girl With The Dragon Tattoo*, we've found its sequel rather lacking. While there are some tense action scenes, the pace is far too slow and the characters lack the chemistry they had in the original film. An otherwise average thriller with too many loose ends. **DJ**

RATING: ★★★★★



Resident Evil: Afterlife

PRICE: £19.99

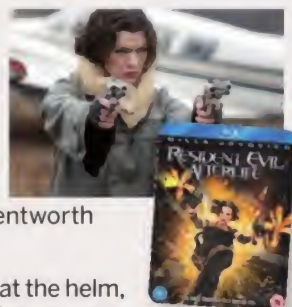
SOUND: Dolby Digital 5.1

DIRECTOR: Paul WS Anderson

STARRING: Milla Jovovich, Wentworth Miller, Ali Larter

PAUL WS ANDERSON is back at the helm, but we wish he hadn't bothered. Awful dialogue, ropey effects and a loopy plot make this a must-miss. While *Piranha 3D* plods along with a knowing wink, *Afterlife* tries for the serious approach and fails. **DJ**

RATING: ★★★★★



Tekken

PRICE: £19.99

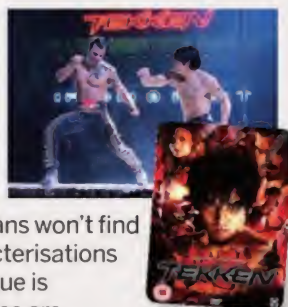
SOUND: Dolby Digital 5.1

DIRECTOR: Dwight H Little

STARRING: Luke Goss, Cung Lee, Jon Foo

EVEN THE BIGGEST *Tekken* fans won't find much to enjoy here. The characterisations are mostly awful and the dialogue is toe curling, while the fight scenes are surprisingly bland and unexciting. It's always good seeing ex Bros member Luke Goss getting work, but this makes Van Damme's *Street Fighter* look like high art. **DJ**

RATING: ★★★★★



Grown Ups

PRICE: £22.99

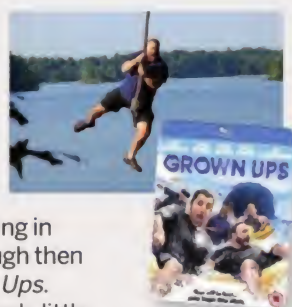
SOUND: Dolby Digital 5.1

DIRECTOR: Dennis Dugan

STARRING: Adam Sandler, Chris Rock, Kevin James

IF WATCHING FAT men urinating in swimming pools makes you laugh then you're in for a treat with *Grown Ups*. Insultingly lowbrow and seemingly little more than an excuse for Adam Sandler to round up all his mates, this is a truly atrocious comedy. Avoid like the proverbial plague. **DJ**

RATING: ★★★★★



The Other Guys

PRICE: £22.99

SOUND: Dolby Digital 5.1

DIRECTOR: Adam McKay

STARRING: Mark Wahlberg, Will Ferrell, Eva Mendes

WILL FERRELL ISN'T afraid to pigeonhole himself. While *The Other Guys* would have been arguably better if it had focused on super cops Samuel L Jackson and Dwayne Johnson for its entirety, Ferrell and Mark Wahlberg are surprisingly funny as their desk-bound replacements. A fun action comedy with some wonderful one-liners. **DJ**

RATING: ★★★★★



Charts

UK Top 5

- 1 Toy Story 3**
Us Brits know a good film when we see one and ensure that Pixar's threequel gets to number one.
RATING: ★★★★★
- 2 Avatar**
It would appear us Brits are as enraptured by Cameron's snorefest as our US cousins.
RATING: ★★★★★
- 3 Iron Man 2**
Awful sequel that undoes all that we liked about the original (and that wasn't that good).
RATING: ★★★★★
- 4 Beauty And The Beast**
Modern classic from Disney that looks sensational in HD. If you don't own this already, buy it now.
RATING: ★★★★★
- 5 An Idiot Abroad**
Karl Pilkington travels the world on behalf of Ricky Gervais and Stephen Merchant.
RATING: ★★★★★

US Top 5

- 1 Avatar**
It's now got extra footage and is spread across three discs, but this is still a woefully average movie.
RATING: ★★★★★
- 2 The Expendables**
Stallone's over-the-top actioner is as dumb as you'd expect, but it's still enjoyable stuff.
RATING: ★★★★★
- 3 Back To The Future**
An excellent set of films receive dazzling Blu-ray transfers and an absolute wealth of fantastic extras.
RATING: ★★★★★
- 4 How To Train Your Dragon**
This charming kid's flick is still riding high in the charts.
RATING: ★★★★★
- 5 Toy Story 3**
Another sterling effort from Pixar and the best part of the trilogy. Deserves to be higher.
RATING: ★★★★★

Top 5 graphic novel adaptations

- 1 Scott Pilgrim Vs The World**
Effortlessly captures the magic of the original work.
RATING: ★★★★★
- 2 Sin City**
Features a stunning transfer and ridiculous amounts of high-octane action.
RATING: ★★★★★
- 3 30 Days Of Night**
Ignore the sequel and hunt down the original. A marvellously scary tale of vampires.
RATING: ★★★★★
- 4 Wanted**
Over-the-top action-fest starring James McAvoy and Angelina Jolie that looks great in HD.
RATING: ★★★★★
- 5 The Watchmen**
This is a surprisingly bland adaptation. Zack Snyder delivers the style, but no substance.
RATING: ★★★★★

HD Reviews TVs and media systems that'll make your home entertainment come to life



Panasonic T-P42G20B

PRICE: £579.99

DIMENSIONS: 1,029 x 654 x 82mm

WHILE YOU CAN get similar-sized TVs for slightly cheaper, this Panasonic still deserves attention. It has a razor-sharp picture, is Wi-Fi ready and has built-in Freeview HD and freesat HD. Yes, it's fairly expensive, but you're certainly getting your money's worth. ★★★★★



LG 42PJ350

PRICE: £379.99

DIMENSIONS: 988 x 617.8 x 55.3mm

HERE'S ANOTHER BUDGET TV we've had our eye on this month, but this time it's not quite up to the competition. There are two HDMI outputs, a USB input and built-in Freeview. It's a nice-looking TV, but for the same price you're better off with Samsung's offering. ★★★★★



Samsung PS42C450

PRICE: £379.99

DIMENSIONS: 1,031 x 631 x 69.5mm

DON'T BE PUT off by the budget price, this is a surprisingly robust offering from Samsung. There are three HDMI slots, a 600Hz refresh rate and USB support. It's not exactly laden with cool features, but it does offer a great picture for the asking price. ★★★★★

PLAYLIST

If you want to know what a game scored then these pages are for you

GAME UNDER

Stock photography, fictitious stories, real lives...



"Ho ho ho! Meeerrrry generic holiday season!"



"Though, to be honest, it's quite likely you're reading this after December 25th..."



"In which case... umm... hmm. I have to admit I'm stumped. I mean, I'm not used to making public appearances after the fact."



Sigh

PS3 LISTING



game	issue	score
3D Collection	195	75%
3D Dot Game Heroes	192	87%
50 Cent: Blood On The Sand	177	70%
Afro Samurai	177	61%
Agarest: Generations Of War	187	78%
Alpha Protocol	193	83%
Aliens Vs Predator	189	79%
Alone In The Dark	173	70%
Armored Core For Answer	173	65%
Armored Core 4	153	67%
Army Of Two	164	80%
Army Of Two: The 40th Day	188	65%
Ashes Cricket 2009	183	30%
Assassin's Creed	161	58%
Assassin's Creed II	186	89%
Assassin's Creed: Brotherhood	199	91%
More than enough additions to take the <i>Assassin's Creed</i> formula into modern classic territory		
Atelier Rorona: The Alchemist Of Arland	198	77%
Backbreaker	193	70%
Band Hero	187	68%
Batman: Arkham Asylum	183	85%
Battle Fantasia	176	67%
Battlefield: Bad Company	168	78%
Battlefield: Bad Company 2	190	93%
Single-player is fairly impressive but take it online and it's bordering on genius. This is quite possibly the best shooter on PS3 today.		
Bayonetta*	187	93%
The most over-the-top, inventive, consistently thrilling, overtly sexual, guiltily enjoyable Japanese action game we've played in years.		
Beijing 2008	168	54%
Beowulf	161	61%
Bionic Commando	179	82%
BioShock	172	93%
This FPS-adventure hybrid has been admirably translated to the PS3. The most atmospheric game of our time.		
BioShock 2	189	88%
BlackSite	163	43%
Bladestorm: The Hundred Years' War	160	58%
BlazBlue: Calamity Trigger	190	85%
BlazBlue: Continuum Shift	198	94%
With its diverse roster, stunning visuals and furiously paced gameplay, <i>Continuum Shift</i> is a must-have for beat-'em-up fans.		
Blazing Angels	151	54%
Blitz: The League II	172	67%
Blur	193	86%
Borderlands	185	80%
Brothers In Arms: Hell's Highway	171	75%
Brütal Legend	185	79%
Burnout Paradise	162	74%
Buzz!: Quiz TV	168	82%
Buzz! Quiz World	185	70%
Call Of Duty 3	151	77%
Call Of Duty: World At War	173	68%
Call Of Duty 4: Modern Warfare	160	88%
Call Of Duty: Black Ops	199	94%
Treyarch's first genuinely brilliant entry to the series and a standard-bearer for fast-paced online shooters		

game	issue	score
Call Of Juarez: Bound In Blood	181	85%
Castlevania: Lords Of Shadow	197	85%
Chronicles Of Riddick: Assault On Dark Athena	178	87%
Civilization Revolution	168	90%
The popular PC series makes its way to the PS3, so you can while away your hours playing this instead of doing important things.		
Clash Of The Titans	193	65%
Clive Barker's Jericho	159	84%
Colin McRae: DiRT	158	91%
Quite simply the second-best rally game on the PS3. Still, if simulation is what you're after then go for this over <i>Sega Rally</i> .		
Colin McRae: DiRT 2	184	87%
Command & Conquer: Red Alert 3	178	65%
Conan	160	71%
Condemned 2	165	78%
Conflict: Denied Ops	164	50%
Create	199	71%
Cross Edge	182	59%
Damnation	181	38%
Dante's Inferno	189	80%
Dark Sector	165	62%
Dark Void	188	81%
Darksiders	188	83%
Dead Rising 2	197	78%
Dead Space	172	87%
Dead To Rights: Retribution	192	68%
Def Jam: Icon	151	79%
Def Jam Rapstar	199	72%
Demon's Souls	193	92%
As good as it was when we reviewed it on import, but with a better translation and it's also available here. One of PS3's best games.		
Destroy All Humans!: Path Of The Furon	178	29%
Devil May Cry 4	163	89%
Disgaea 3: Absence Of Justice	175	81%
DJ Hero	186	91%
It's just like playing <i>Guitar Hero</i> for the first time all over again, although <i>DJ Hero</i> is slightly more expensive.		
DJ Hero 2	198	88%
Dragon Age: Origins	186	82%
Dragon Ball: Raging Blast	186	40%
Dragon Ball Z: Burst Limit	168	61%
Dynasty Warriors: Gundam	160	40%
Dynasty Warriors Gundam 2	176	43%
Dynasty Warriors: Strikeforce	189	37%
Dynasty Warriors 6	164	30%
Dynasty Warriors 6: Empires	181	44%
EA Sports MMA	198	89%
Eat Lead	178	38%
Enchanted Arms	152	69%
Enemy Territory: Quake Wars	168	60%
Enslaved: Odyssey To The West	197	83%
Eternal Sonata	176	87%
Everybody's Golf 5*	158	88%
Everybody's Golf: World Tour	165	91%
The most recent <i>Tiger Woods</i> game may have been rubbish, but don't worry because <i>Everybody's Golf</i> is bloody brilliant.		
Eye Of Judgment	159	65%
EyePet	185	83%
EyePet: Move	197	84%
F1 2010	197	86%
FaceBreaker	170	55%
Fairytale Fights	186	51%
Fallout 3	173	97%
<i>Fallout 3</i> lives up to its promise and then some. It's a damning portrayal of the consequences of war, and a compelling RPG experience.		

game	issue	score
Fallout: New Vegas	198	88%
Fantastic Four: Rise Of The Silver Surfer	155	39%
Far Cry 2	172	74%
F.E.A.R.	151	81%
F.E.A.R. 2: Project Origin	176	87%
FIFA 08	159	84%
FIFA 09	171	87%
FIFA 10	184	90%
The best football game made marginally better. The crown held by <i>PES</i> seems like so long ago now.		
FIFA 11	197	91%
<i>FIFA</i> continues to improve and continues to dominate with this latest addition to the superior footy franchise.		
FIFA Street 3	163	66%
FIFA World Cup 2010	192	70%
Fight Night Round 3	151	87%
Fight Night Round 4	181	84%
Final Fantasy XIII	190	85%
Fist Of The North Star: Ken's Rage	198	51%
Folklore	158	66%
Formula One Championship Edition	151	72%
Fracture	171	72%
Front Mission Evolved	198	52%
Fuel	180	49%
Full Auto 2: Battlelines	151	69%
G-Force	183	59%
Genji: Days Of The Blade	151	38%
Ghost Recon Advanced Warfighter 2	157	83%
Ghostbusters: The Videogame	180	80%
GI Joe	183	22%
God Of War Collection*	188	93%
Two of the greatest PS2 action games of all time come together at a bargain price. Essential purchase.		
God Of War III	190	88%
Gran Turismo 5 Prologue	165	75%
Grand Theft Auto IV	166	98%
If you haven't already bought it, then stop reading this box, put your shoes on and go out and get it! The best game ever? Probably.		
Green Day: Rock Band	194	77%
GTA: Episodes From Liberty City	191	94%
Two fine expansions bundled together and without the need for <i>GTA IV</i> to play them. What more could you want?		
Guitar Hero III	160	90%
<i>Guitar Hero III</i> is another great rhythm-action beast, sure to delight fans and newcomers alike. So grab a guitar and rock out!		
Guitar Hero 5	184	81%
Guitar Hero: Aerosmith	168	63%
Guitar Hero Greatest Hits	182	76%
Guitar Hero Metallica	179	88%
Guitar Hero: Van Halen	189	65%
Guitar Hero: Warriors Of Rock	197	71%
Guitar Hero World Tour	173	95%
<i>World Tour</i> just about manages to trump rival <i>Rock Band</i> with its entertaining music-creation tools, and quality peripherals.		
Harry Potter And The Half-Blood Prince	182	60%
Harry Potter: The Order Of The Phoenix	155	32%
Haze	167	64%
Heavenly Sword	157	71%
Heavy Rain	189	94%
It will certainly split opinion, but we absolutely love it. A valuable addition to the wonderful world of gaming.		
Heavy Rain: Move Edition	198	70%
Heroes Over Europe	184	48%

This month's new entries

The newest games, freshly squeezed among all your old favourites

Call Of Duty: Black Ops PS3	94%	The Sims 3 PS3	87%
Assassin's Creed: Brotherhood PS3	91%	TV Superstars PS3	53%
Need For Speed: Hot Pursuit PS3	91%	Create PS3	71%
Star Wars: The Force Unleashed II PS3	61%	Singstar Guitar PS3	70%
James Bond 007: Blood Stone PS3	63%	Lord Of The Rings: Aragorn's Quest PS3	60%
WWE Smackdown vs Raw 2011 PS3	63%	Def Jam Rapstar PS3	72%
Red Dead Redemption: Undead Nightmare PS3	87%	God Of War: Ghost Of Sparta PSP	79%
Majin And The Forsaken Kingdom PS3	72%	EyePet PSP	77%
NBA 2K11 PS3	82%	No Heroes Allowed PSP	69%
Rock Band 3 PS3	84%	Sonic 4: Episode One PSN	82%
The Fight PS3	42%	Costume Quest PSN	70%
Time Crisis: Razing Storm PS3	58%	Swords And Soldiers PSN	88%
The Shoot PS3	76%	Dead Space: Ignition PSN	47%

game	issue	score
Ice Age 3: Dawn Of The Dinosaurs	182	47%
IL-2 Sturmovik: Birds Of Prey	183	72%
inFamous	180	81%
International Cricket 2010	194	61%
Iron Man	166	58%
Iron Man 2	193	50%
Jak And Daxter: The Lost Frontier	187	59%
James Bond 007: Blood Stone	199	63%
James Cameron's Avatar: The Game	187	64%
John Daly's ProStroke Golf	197	70%
Juiced 2: Hot Import Nights	159	78%
Just Cause 2	190	87%
Kane & Lynch: Dead Men	160	73%
Kane & Lynch 2: Dog Days	196	71%
Katamari Forever	184	88%
Killzone 2	176	93%
Sony has proven that it has a PlayStation platform capable of supporting a truly world-class FPS. Best graphics ever.		
Kung Fu Rider	196	65%
Lair	158	52%
Last Rebellion	191	42%
Legend Of Spyro: Dawn Of The Dragon	174	54%
Legendary	173	62%
Lego Batman	173	65%
Lego Harry Potter: Years 1-4	194	79%
Lego Indiana Jones: The Original Adventures	167	73%
Lego Indiana Jones 2: The Adventure Continues	187	71%
Lego Rock Band	187	75%
Lego Star Wars: The Complete Saga	160	76%
Leisure Suit Larry: Box Office Bust	180	24%
LittleBigPlanet	172	94%
Create, share and play. Sackboy heads up Media Molecule's highly customisable and adorable platformer.		
Lord Of The Rings: Aragorn's Quest	199	60%
Lost Planet 2	192	75%
Lost Planet: Extreme Condition	163	69%
Lost: The Video Game	164	38%
LOTR: Conquest	175	52%
Madden NFL 07	151	82%
Madden NFL 08	157	82%
Madden NFL 09	170	83%
Madden NFL 10	184	82%
Madden NFL 11	196	84%
Mafia II	196	81%
MAG	189	68%
Majin And The Forsaken Kingdom	199	72%
Marvel Ultimate Alliance	151	64%
Marvel Ultimate Alliance 2	185	57%
Medal Of Honor	198	86%
Medal Of Honor Airborne	161	85%
Mercenaries 2: World In Flames	171	78%
Metal Gear Solid 4	167	92%
Not the final Metal Gear Solid game after all then. Still brilliant though, and still largely incomprehensible.		
Mobile Suit Gundam: Crossfire	151	37%
Modern Warfare 2	186	94%
A questionable single-player mode is rendered null and void by the best multiplayer we've ever played.		
Midnight Club: Los Angeles	173	84%
Mini Ninjas	184	80%
Mirror's Edge	173	71%
ModNation Racers	192	90%
The best kart racer by far on the PlayStation 3, but combined with incredible levels of creativity. If you love LBP you'll love this, too.		
Monster Madness	170	78%

game	issue	score
Mortal Kombat vs DC Universe	173	68%
MotoGP 08	172	65%
MotoGP 09/10	190	77%
MotorStorm	151	92%
With the addition of an online multiplayer, MotorStorm gets the score it deserves, and currently leads the lines for the next gen.		
MotorStorm: Pacific Rift	172	93%
With its balls strapped firmly to the wall, Pacific Rift amplifies the drama of the original to create the PS3's best racing title.		
MX Vs ATV Reflex	189	68%
MX Vs ATV Untamed	164	58%
Naruto: Ultimate Ninja Storm	174	59%
NASCAR 08	157	38%
Naughty Bear	195	64%
NBA 07	153	33%
NBA 2K7	151	76%
NBA 2K8	172	71%
NBA 2K10	186	79%
NBA 2K11	199	82%
NBA Live 08	158	59%
NBA Live 09	170	81%
NBA Street: Homecourt	151	68%
Need For Speed Carbon	151	76%
Need For Speed: Hot Pursuit	199	91%
Hot Pursuit is one of the best arcade racers of all time – pure, unadulterated bliss in game form.		
Need For Speed ProStreet	161	86%
Need For Speed Shift	184	81%
Need For Speed Undercover	173	75%
Nier	192	54%
NHL 2K7	151	80%
NHL 2K9	172	67%
NHL 2K10	186	70%
NHL 09	170	88%
NHL 10	184	85%
NHL 11	198	89%
Ninja Gaiden Sigma	154	88%
Ninja Gaiden Sigma 2	184	82%
Operation Flashpoint: Dragon Rising	185	78%
Overlord: Raising Hell	167	65%
Overlord II	181	68%
Pain	183	69%
PES 2008	159	70%
PES 2009	172	80%
PES 2010	185	72%
PES 2011	197	73%
PixelJunk Racers	160	74%
POTC: At World's End	154	48%
Prince Of Persia	174	83%
Prince Of Persia: The Forgotten Sands	193	68%
Prison Break: The Conspiracy	191	40%
Prototype	181	76%
Pure	171	80%
Pure Football	194	69%
Quantum Of Solace	175	57%
Quantum Theory	197	29%
Race Driver: GRID	167	85%
Racket Sports	198	37%
Rainbow Six Vegas	155	88%
Rainbow Six Vegas 2	164	78%
Ratchet & Clank: A Crack In Time	186	82%
Ratchet & Clank: Tools Of Destruction	160	72%
Red Dead Redemption	193	92%
Relocates the familiar GTA formula to a superbly realised new setting and, in many ways, is unlike anything else as a result.		
Red Dead Redemption: Undead Nightmare	199	87%
Red Faction: Guerrilla	180	80%

game	issue	score
Resident Evil 5	177	86%
Resident Evil 5: Gold Edition	190	86%
Resistance: Fall Of Man	151	83%
Resistance 2	173	90%
With its impressive set pieces and glorious multiplayer mode, Resistance 2 is one of the best FPSs on the PS3.		
Resonance Of Fate	191	79%
Ridge Racer 7	151	75%
Rise Of The Argonauts	176	58%
Rock Band	169	94%
Rock Band could be the best rhythm-action game ever. Especially if you're playing with a group of friends. Even better after a few beers.		
Rock Band 2	179	96%
With the incredible tracklist, tweaked engine, and new modes, this is easily the best rhythm-action game currently available.		
Rock Band 3	199	84%
Rogue Warrior	188	09%
R.U.S.E.	197	82%
Sacred 2: Fallen Angel	180	76%
Saints Row 2	172	79%
Saw	186	52%
Saw II: Flesh & Blood	198	36%
Sega Mega Drive Ultimate Collection	177	85%
SBK 08	172	55%
SBK X: Superbike World Championship	193	67%
Sega Rally	158	92%
Simply the best rally game on the PS3. Unless simulation is your bag then you'll want to go for Colin McRae. Not much in it, really.		
Sega Superstars Tennis	165	68%
Sengoku Basara: Samurai Heroes	198	76%
Shaun White Skateboarding	198	70%
Shaun White Snowboarding	173	72%
Shellshock 2: Blood Trails	177	32%
Silent Hill: Homecoming	174	64%
Simpsons Game	160	82%
SingStar	159	80%
Singstar Guitar	199	70%
SingStar Pop Edition	179	81%
Singularity	195	80%
Skate	159	86%
Skate 2	175	82%
Skate 3	192	86%
Sonic & Sega All-Stars Racing	190	78%
Sonic The Hedgehog	151	52%
Sonic Unleashed	175	48%
Soul Calibur IV	169	94%
Even the gimmicky appearance of Darth Vader can't spoil Soul Calibur IV. Another wonderful addition to the franchise.		
Spider-Man 3	155	33%
Spider-Man: Shattered Dimensions	197	69%
Spider-Man: Web Of Shadows	173	55%
Splinter Cell Double Agent	153	79%
Split/Second: Velocity	192	90%
Just beating Blur to the chequered flag, Split/Second is a wonderfully intense racing game in the Burnout mould.		
Sports Champions	196	83%
Star Ocean: The Last Hope International	190	63%
Star Wars: The Force Unleashed	171	65%
Star Wars: The Force Unleashed II	199	61%
Start The Party!	196	72%
Stormrise	178	51%
Stranglehold	159	65%

*denotes import review

GAMING CLICHES & VIDEOGAME LOGIC



Unoriginal fantasy

THIS ISN'T JUST a videogame cliché – it's a fantasy cliché in general. We're sure there are fantasy worlds created without the influence of Tolkien, but the vast majority of them seem to be ripped right out of the pages of LOTR. There are undoubtedly great games in



this cluster, but there is a point where it becomes too much.

We tire of this identikit world, where people say things like "forsooth" (sometimes), everything looks like the Lake District and regional accents are meant as a window into a realm of pure imagination. Surely if something is 'fantasy' it can – and should – be anything the creator wants it to



be? Meaning it could be more than just the same every time.

Just think – away from the cliché we could have so much fun with things. Hammers with tiny hats on them! Dwarves that aren't bearded alcoholics! Not a single ogre in sight! Oh how we yearn for a world where fantasy actually digs deep into the fantasies of the creatives



behind the game. Well, maybe not that deep.

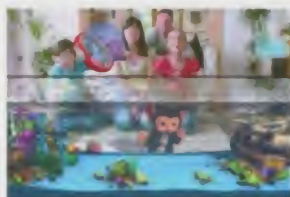
There are times when, in this new era of Actually Fantastical Fantasy – as we're calling it – we will accept Tolkien-infused worlds. Mainly when games based on the Lord Of The Rings books or movies, or things based on The Hobbit are announced. Other than that, we're going to have to be a bit stricter in future. Maybe. We probably won't, though.

THINGS I LIKE

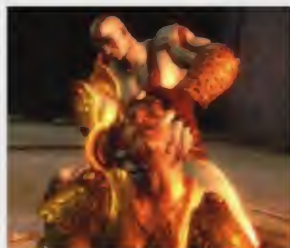
This month: EyePet, by Kratos McGodofwar



MY FAVOURITE THING in the world just has to be *EyePet*. I love how his twinkly little face runs around on the screen! He looks just like the ickie kitty I had when I was a boy, but there's no chance of my dad (Zeus) killing this one. Not like he did with Fluffykins. Oh, Fluffykins, I miss you.



I LIKE EYEPET because it lets me express my creativity. People tend not to think I'm very creative, but I am! I once drew a horse and it was green and it had five legs (one was spare) and I called it Eusebio. Apparently he was a footballer, but I don't know what football is! Obviously.



AS YOU HAVE probably seen, I am sometimes prone to what doctors have told me are 'violent outbursts'. While I disagree with the doctors (after I've introduced them to OBLIVION – the state, not the game), I have still taken up their advice of playing *EyePet* whenever I feel angry. I currently play *EyePet* for about 23.7 hours a day.



I THINK THINGS might be better in the future, though, if I can keep playing *EyePet*. One day I might be able to leave the house and not actually dismember indiscriminately! I know it sounds like a pipe dream, but I really do think one day Fluffykins 2.0 will be able to make me a better person.

game issue score

Street Fighter IV	176	95%
The best beat-'em-up on the PS3, probably the best beat-'em-up ever, and maybe even the best game ever. Our poor little thumbs.		

Stuntman: Ignition	157	82%
SuperCar Challenge	183	66%
Superstars V8: Next Challenge	190	55%
Superstars V8 Racing	181	63%

Super Street Fighter IV	191	90%
The fact that you're buying a lot of stuff you've probably bought already is the only drawback to what is the best fighter ever made.		

Tekken 6	184	94%
There are flaws that hurt the experience, but nothing, <i>nothing</i> , stops <i>Tekken 6</i> from being an intense, tactical and brilliant fighting game.		

The Beatles: Rock Band	184	96%
It's a gorgeous game that'll make Beatles fans feel like they're being swaddled in a veil of pure joy. A breathtaking product.		

The Bourne Conspiracy	168	72%
The Club	163	80%

The Darkness	154	91%
This unique FPS combines the best bits of <i>Mafia</i> and war films along with some highly innovative gameplay elements.		

The Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion	152	91%
This proves once and for all that Western RPGs are better than Japanese ones! Sort of. Whatever, <i>Oblivion</i> is an awesome game.		

The Fight	199	42%
The Godfather	151	37%
The Godfather II	178	38%
The Golden Compass	162	32%
The Incredible Hulk	168	52%
The King Of Fighters XII	182	82%

The Orange Box	161	93%
Five brilliant games for the price of one, what on Earth could be better than that? Nothing, that's what. <i>Absolutely nothing</i> .		

The Saboteur	187	67%
The Shoot	199	76%
The Sims 3	199	87%
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 07	151	88%
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 08	158	73%
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 09	171	86%
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 10	181	69%
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 11	194	60%
Time Crisis 4	166	69%
Time Crisis: Razing Storm	199	58%
TimeShift	162	72%
TNA Impact!	171	71%
Tom Clancy's EndWar	173	80%
Tom Clancy's H.A.W.X	177	75%
Tom Clancy's H.A.W.X. 2	196	69%
Tomb Raider: Underworld	173	83%
Tony Hawk's Project 8	151	85%
Tony Hawk's Proving Ground	160	72%
Tony Hawk: Ride	188	52%
Top Spin 3	168	71%
Tornado Outbreak	186	56%
Toy Story 3	195	82%
Transformers: Revenge Of The Fallen	182	41%
Transformers: The Game	156	34%
Transformers: War For Cybertron	194	80%
Trinity Universe	194	61%
Turning Point: Fall Of Liberty	165	40%
Turok	163	46%
TV Superstars	199	53%
UEFA EURO 2008	165	62%

UFC Undisputed 2009	180	90%
<i>Undisputed</i> is gorgeous to look at, it's incredibly deep, and it's one of the most addictive fighters we've played in ages.		

UFC Undisputed 2010	193	88%
Uncharted: Drake's Fortune	161	87%

Uncharted 2: Among Thieves	185	96%
<i>Among Thieves</i> has proven itself to be a real work of class. It's one of the best games in recent years.		

game issue score

Unreal Tournament III	162	88%
Untold Legends: Dark Kingdom	151	54%
Valkyria Chronicles	173	82%
Vancouver 2010	189	76%

Vanquish	197	93%
A brilliant surprise from the developer of <i>Bayonetta</i> and easily one of the best games we've played in 2010.		

Viking: Battle For Asgard	165	74%
Virtua Fighter 5	151	83%
Virtua Tennis 2009	180	80%

Virtua Tennis 3	150	91%
Pick-up-and-play gameplay strikes another blow, proving that the PS3 is currently at its best when it keeps it simple.		

Wanted: Weapons Of Fate	179	63%
Warhawk	157	84%
Watchmen: The End Is Nigh	183	55%
Way Of The Samurai 3	190	16%
Wet	184	41%
Wheelman	178	72%
Where The Wild Things Are	188	56%
White Knight Chronicles	190	55%
Wolfenstein	183	72%
World Snooker Championship 2007	151	56%
WRC: FIA World Rally Championship	197	76%
WSC REAL 09: World Snooker Championship	177	67%
WWE Legends Of Wrestlemania	178	80%
WWE SmackDown Vs Raw 2008	159	88%
WWE SmackDown Vs Raw 2009	173	74%
WWE SmackDown Vs Raw 2010	185	77%
WWE SmackDown Vs Raw 2011	199	63%
X-Blades	178	54%
X-Men Origins: Wolverine	179	71%
Yakuza 3	191	80%
Yakuza 4*	193	75%

PS STORE LISTING

1942: Joint Strike	170	74%
3-On-3 NHL Arcade	177	62%

After Burner Climax	193	91%
Classic, frantic and utterly brilliant arcade action from Sega. A fine example of what the company is best known for.		

Age Of Booty	172	81%
Alien Breed: Impact	196	80%
Anarchy: Rush Hour	194	73%
Aqua Panic	193	68%
Battlefield 1943	182	89%
Bishi Bashi Special!	175	61%
Bionic Commando Rearmed	169	88%
Blade Kitten	197	72%
Blast Factor	152	72%
Blue Toad Murder Files: The Mysteries Of Little Riddle Episode I	188	65%
Blue Toad Murder Files: The Mysteries Of Little Riddle Episode II	188	61%
Blue Toad Murder Files Episodes 4/5/6	193	70%
Bombberman Ultra	185	82%

Braid	188	93%
We had to wait quite a while, but time is what we have plenty of both with and for <i>Braid</i> . Simply brilliant.		

Burn Zombie Burn	178	85%
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Call Of Duty Classic	188	90%
It doesn't have <i>MW2</i> 's polish but it's a great game both as a slice of history and in its own right.		

Calling All Cars	155	81%
Catan	195	85%
Comet Crash	186	84%
Command & Conquer: Red Alert	168	70%
Command & Conquer Red Alert: Retaliation	176	55%
Command & Conquer Red Alert 3: Commander's Challenge	185	68%
Command & Conquer	175	44%

game issue score

Cool Boarders	173	57%
Cool Boarders 2	175	31%
Costume Quest	199	70%
Crash Bandicoot	172	77%
Crash Bandicoot 3: Warped	174	82%
Crash Commando	174	80%
Crash Team Racing	170	79%

Critter Crunch	188	91%
This is yet another beautiful, cute and high-class puzzler on the PSN that works perfectly and is a joy to play.		

Crystal Defenders	184	48%
Dark Mist	164	53%
Dead Space: Ignition	199	47%
DeathSpank	195	83%
Destruction Derby	01	80%
.detuned	186	50%
Digger HD	186	52%
Diner Dash	190	66%

Driver	171	90%
With the most cinematic car chases ever seen in a game, <i>Driver</i> made a huge impact in 1998. Despite rosey graphics, it's still a playable title.		

Droplitz	184	91%
<i>Droplitz</i> is a superb puzzler that blends <i>Rez</i> -style layers of music, pipes and dials to create one of the most satisfying puzzlers in years.		

Earthworm Jim HD	196	89%
echochrome	169	85%
Elefunk	170	45%
Everybody's Golf 2	62	83%
Fade To Black	09	44%
Fat Princess	183	65%
Fatal Inertia EX	168	65%
FIFA 09 Ultimate Team	178	61%

Final Fight: Double Impact	193	90%
This scrolling-fighter classic from 1989 makes an almost faultless appearance on PSN. Stick it on your download list.		

Final Fantasy VII	181	96%
Even after all these years it still holds up. In fact, our mark seems to have gone up 3% since 1997.		

Final Fantasy VIII	190	90%
A truly engaging RPG – if you've never experienced the game before then make sure this is the next thing you download.		

Final Fantasy IX	195	90%
Never gets the love it deserves, but this PSN release gives you the chance to experience Square Enix's refreshing RPG all over again.		

Flight Control HD	198	85%
Flock!	179	70%

fIOW	151	90%
Another 90% game for the PS3, another lesson in simple, addictive gameplay. <i>fIOW</i> is an innovative title available on the Network.		

Flower	176	85%
Frogger Returns	190	35%
G-Police	27	84%
Geon	175	71%
Go! Puzzle	152	58%
Gran Turismo HD	150	75%
Gravity Crash	187	85%
Greed Corp	191	75%
GTI Club+	174	72%
Gundemonium Collection	197	80%
Gunstar Heroes	181	85%
Hamsterball	194	72%
Hardcore 4x4	15	81%
Hasbro Family Game Night	187	60%
Heavy Weapon	187	75%
High Velocity Bowling	163	50%
Hi-Octane	178	64%
Hustle Kings	190	87%
Hyperballoid HD	188	70%
Inferno Pool	181	81%
International Track & Field	171	80%
Interpol: The Trail Of Doctor Chaos	185	48%

game	issue	score
Invincible Tiger: The Legend Of Han Tao	185	70%
Jet Rider 2	176	71%
Joe Danger	194	96%
Simply put, <i>Joe Danger</i> is one of the best games you'll currently find on the PSN. Buy it. Buy it now.		
Judge Dredd	18	19%
Jumping Flash	172	55%
Kick-Ass The Game	194	60%
Kula World	172	71%
Landit Bandit	195	66%
Lara Croft And The Guardian Of Light	198	90%
Lara is back to her best in <i>The Guardian Of Light</i> . <i>Tomb Raider</i> fans will love it and for just £9.99 everyone else should, too.		
Lead & Gold: Gangs Of The Wild West	193	65%
Lemmings	151	79%
Linger In Shadows	173	69%
LocoRoco Cocoreccho!	159	80%
Lumines Supernova	178	90%
Probably the best puzzle game on the PSN, which is saying something because there's loads of competition.		
Madden NFL Arcade	188	58%
Magic Carpet	179	65%
Marvel Vs Capcom 2	182	90%
This game has an astonishing amount to offer if you're prepared to plunge into its murky depths		
Matt Hazard: Blood Bath And Beyond	189	69%
MediEvil	173	45%
Mega Man 9	172	75%
Mega Man 10	192	82%
Metal Gear Solid	187	93%
While it looks rather rough now, the game itself remains a real high point in the franchise. Simply essential.		
Metal Gear Solid Online	175	45%
Monkey Island 2: LeChuck's Revenge Special Edition	195	94%
The HD remake of arguably the best game in the <i>Monkey Island</i> series is a more than welcome addition to the PSN.		
Motorhead	173	60%
Namco Museum Essentials	193	60%
Noby Noby Boy	177	85%
Nucleus	155	82%
Numblast	183	60%
N20	37	70%
OutRun Online Arcade	180	80%
Pain	183	69%
Peggle	189	94%
So addictive it should come with some sort of government warning. Terrific value for money and a superb little puzzle game.		
PixelJunk Eden	169	67%
PixelJunk Monsters	163	94%
The second game in the <i>PixelJunk</i> series is great fun and brilliantly addictive. Buy it and play it constantly for hours on end!		
PixelJunk Shooter	187	93%
Q-Games delivers excellence on the PSN once again with its <i>PixelJunk</i> series, this time in the form of a classic shoot-'em-up.		
Piyotama	162	62%
Planet Minigolf	196	58%
Polar Panic	190	65%
Populous: The Beginning	46	70%
Prince Of Persia Classic	173	67%
Puzzle Chronicles	194	70%
Puzzle Quest Galactrix	181	68%
Q*bert	58	53%
Rag Doll Kung Fu: Fists Of Plastic	179	83%
Rampage: World Tour	29	77%
Ratchet & Clank: Quest For Booty	170	69%
Rayman	01	76%
Revenge Of The Wounded Dragons	191	60%
Riff: Everyday Shooter	162	86%
Rocket Knight	194	74%

game	issue	score
Rocketmen: Axis Of Evil	165	63%
Clever, funny and taxing in all the right ways, we're very happy that the Freelance Police are on PlayStation 3.		
Sam & Max: The Devil's Playhouse Episode 1	194	90%
This is even better than the first episode due to the fact it has better puzzles and even funnier dialogue		
Sam & Max: The Devil's Playhouse Episode 2	194	92%
Savage Moon	175	87%
Scott Pilgrim Vs The World	197	77%
Section 8	193	78%
Shank	197	86%
Shatter	183	91%
Sheep	171	78%
Siren Blood Curse	170	62%
Smash Cars	184	50%
SOCOM Confrontation	178	55%
Soldner-X 2: Final Prototype	195	70%
Sonic 4: Episode One	199	82%
Sonic Adventure	198	63%
Spin Jam	174	32%
Syphon Filter	48	93%
Gabe Logan's gritty PSone adventure has shadowed all that came after. As always, the original really is best.		
Snakeball	176	92%
Star Trek: D-A-C	189	57%
Street Fighter Alpha: Warrior's Dream	159	57%
Street Skater 2	178	40%
Super Puzzle Fighter II HD Turbo Remix	168	78%
Super Rub-A-Dub	151	83%
Supersonic Acrobatic Rocket-Powered Battle-Cars	177	65%
Super Stardust HD	155	74%
Super Street Fighter II Turbo HD Remix	176	72%
Switchball	191	75%
Swords And Soldiers	199	88%
Syphon Filter 3	170	80%
Tales Of Monkey Island	196	91%
Telltale Games' excellent modern addition to the <i>Monkey Island</i> franchise finally sees the light of day on PSN. Go pick it up.		
Tank Battles	186	68%
Tekken HD	150	80%
Tekken 5: Dark Resurrection Online	161	87%
The Last Guy	171	91%
Snake meets Pac-Man meets Google Maps. <i>The Last Guy</i> is yet another innovative and compelling addition to the PSN's line-up.		
The Punisher: No Mercy	182	49%
The Secret Of Monkey Island Special Edition	195	92%
LucasArts' classic point-and-click adventure gets an HD makeover and will hopefully be the first of many classics heading to PSN.		
Theme Hospital	32	80%
Theme Park	174	80%
TMNT: Turtles In Time Re-shelled	186	57%
Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six	54	34%
Top Gun	198	53%
Topotai: Spinning Through The Worlds	183	61%
ToyHome	162	31%
Trash Panic	181	79%
Trials Of Topaq	159	50%
Trine	184	85%
Tumble	198	70%
Uno	189	85%
Vagrant Story	189	82%
Vandal Hearts: Flames Of Judgment	192	87%
Wakeboarding HD	192	65%
Warhawk: Operation Fallen Star	171	80%
Watchmen: The End Is Nigh	183	55%
WipEout	01	89%
WipEout HD	172	84%
Wolfenstein	181	70%
Worms	179	91%
There's a reason <i>Worms</i> is still going strong, and that's because people never get tired of its fun personality and addictive gameplay.		

game	issue	score
Worms 2: Armageddon	198	87%
Zuma	182	78%

PSP mini LISTING

Alien Havoc	186	68%
Bloons	186	65%
Brainpipe	186	70%
BreakQuest	186	45%
Field Runners	186	85%
Fortix	186	57%
Funky Punch	186	49%
Hero Of Sparta	186	57%
Kahoots	186	88%

Pinball Fantasies	186	90%
<i>Pinball Fantasies</i> was originally released on the Amiga and features four tables and some excellent pinball gaming.		

Puzzle Scape	186	75%
Tetris	186	93%

How it is possible to make Tetris feel so fresh and so much fun again we don't know, but it's managed here.		
Vempire	186	67%

PSP LISTING

300: March To Glory	152	59%
Ace Combat X	147	72%
Ace Combat: Joint Assault	194	79%
After Burner: Black Falcon	152	82%
Ape Academy	134	44%
Ape Academy 2	145	52%
Ape Escape P	140	37%
Army Of Two: The 40th Day	190	45%
Assassin's Creed: Bloodlines	187	77%
Astonishia Story	142	68%
Beaterator	186	72%
Blade Dancer: Lineage Of Light	145	45%
BlazBlue: Calamity Trigger Portable	194	84%
Blood Bowl	184	53%
Bombberman	150	83%
Boulder Dash: Rocks!	165	69%
Breath Of Fire III	138	82%
Brothers In Arms: D-Day	149	69%
Burnout Dominator	153	65%
Burnout Legends	134	94%

Despite being more of a 'best of' than a completely new game, <i>Legends</i> is the best racing game on the PSP.		
Buzz! Brain Bender	175	68%

Capcom Classics Collection Reloaded	147	80%
Capcom Classics Collection Remixed	141	72%
Cars	143	60%
Castlevania: The Dracula X Chronicles	163	78%
Championship Manager	137	65%
Championship Manager 2006	140	32%
Cid The Dummy	180	32%
Coded Arms	134	53%
Call Of Duty: Roads To Victory	153	69%
Colin McRae Rally 2005 Plus	134	84%
Crisis Core - Final Fantasy VII	167	87%
Crush	154	80%
Dante's Inferno	191	76%
Dead Or Alive: Paradise	192	56%

Disgaea: Afternoon Of Darkness	161	92%
An absolute must-have for RPG fans, and one of the best titles available on the PSP. A simply brilliant game.		

Dissidia: Final Fantasy	184	60%
Disgaea 2: Dark Hero Days	190	87%
Dragon Ball Z: Shin Budokai 2	154	50%
Driver 76	154	68%
Dungeons & Dragons: Tactics	159	55%

*denotes import review



DAY 1: The **Play** team's usual brand of semi-anarchic hilarity is nullified by the realisation that they've got to produce a milestone issue of the magazine. Confusion reigns. Terror spreads. The value of shares in the magazine plummet in this period of uncertainty.



DAY 2: Once everyone's had a cup of tea, everything gets back to normal. Taking the huge amount of work necessary to produce a list of 200 of the greatest moments in PlayStation's history in their stride, the team begins to rebuild confidence.



DAY 17: A spanner is thrown in the works as a new editor arrives, demanding the team tear the beating heart out of their list and put in every single thing he demands – and nothing else. Confusion spreads. Terror reigns.



DAY 23: Six days later, everyone realises the new editor was joking and work re-commences on the top 200. By this point fatigue is starting to set in, though, and can only be offset by regular bouts on *FIFA 11*. Naturally.



DAY 30: The tournament manages to last seven days. Realising they haven't yet finished their list, the team – in the technical term – "does a runner", leaving all of the work to the cleaners. The list turns out impeccable. In more ways than one.

Ice-T vs Ice Tea



IN THE ULTIMATE clash of the tea/T-titans, there can be no winners. Still, both come in many varieties – ice tea can be bottled or made from concentrate, while Ice-T is involved in both rap and metal.



ICE TEA, WITH its many varieties, is enjoyed the world over for its refreshing flavour and diverse serving options. A lot of British people are still put off because it's not 'normal' tea. Which is fair enough.



ICE-T, ON THE other hand, is enjoyed the world over for his refreshing demeanour and lyrical options. Again, a lot of British people are put off because he's not 'normal' tea. Which is, again, fair enough.



IT SEEMS IMPOSSIBLE for either side to win, though Ice-T gets ahead of ice tea due to his love for videogames. As far as we know, ice tea has never encouraged people to play *Call Of Duty*.



THE WINNER HAS to be Ice-T. While ice tea puts up a great fight, Ice-T edges it on account of him *not* being ice tea and because he is Ice-T. Hot tea, on the other hand – that's a different battleground.

game	issue	score
Dungeon Siege: Throne Of Agony	148	85%
Dynasty Warriors: Strikeforce	179	69%
EA Replay	147	74%
echochrome	169	85%
echoshift	191	73%
Everybody's Golf 2	167	86%
Everybody's Tennis	195	88%
Every Extend Extra	145	84%
Exit	138	65%
EyePet	199	77%
F1 2009	187	66%
F1 Grand Prix	134	81%
Field Commander	145	83%
FIFA 06	136	43%
FIFA 07	147	81%
FIFA 11	198	69%
FIFA World Cup 2010	193	65%
Fired Up	134	60%
Final Fantasy	164	63%
Final Fantasy Tactics	159	86%
FlatOut: Head On	164	79%
Football Manager 2007	147	62%
Football Manager Handheld	139	82%
Football Manager Handheld 2008	161	49%
Football Manager Handheld 2010	187	60%
Formula One 06	143	78%
Frantix	136	36%
Gangs Of London	144	65%
Ghost Recon Advanced Warfighter 2	157	42%
Ghostbusters: The Video Game	188	55%
Gitaroo Man Lives!	144	79%
Go! Sudoku	137	45%
God Of War: Chains Of Olympus	165	84%
God Of War: Ghost Of Sparta	199	79%
Gradius Collection	144	80%
Gran Turismo	184	85%
Gripshift	136	81%
Grand Theft Auto: Chinatown Wars	185	95%
Bar some combat control issues, <i>GTA: Chinatown Wars</i> has perfectly translated to the PSP. It's a must-have game.		
GTA: Liberty City Stories	135	95%
Successfully taking the <i>GTA</i> formula and putting it on one UMD of pure goodness, this is one of the PSP's best games.		
GTA: Vice City Stories	147	96%
Improving on its predecessor, the only way <i>Vice City Stories</i> could be topped is if <i>San Andreas</i> comes to the PSP.		
Half-Minute Hero	191	87%
Harry Potter And The Goblet Of Fire	136	69%
Hellboy: Science Of Evil	170	60%
Holy Invasion Of Privacy, Badman! What Did I Do To Deserve This?	186	73%
Hot Pixel	155	73%
Indiana Jones And The Staff Of Kings	181	60%
Infected	141	68%
Innocent Life: A Futuristic Harvest Moon	154	70%
International Athletics	170	40%
Invizimals	187	71%
Jak And Daxter: The Lost Frontier	187	59%
Juiced: Eliminator	141	70%
Juiced 2: Hot Import Nights	160	80%
Kao Challengers	137	60%
Killzone: Liberation	146	83%
Kingdom Hearts: Birth By Sleep	196	88%
Lemmings	138	63%
LittleBigPlanet	186	90%
Refined in certain areas and slightly worse in Create mode but still a fantastic addition to PSP's lineup.		
LocoRoco	143	94%
We called this the definitive PSP title in our review, and it is a game that no PSP owner should be without.		
LocoRoco 2	173	82%
LocoRoco Midnight Carnival	186	81%
Lumines II	137	74%
Madden NFL 06	137	74%


game	issue	score
Marvel Trading Cards	155	38%
Me And My Katamari	138	86%
Medal Of Honor Heroes	147	72%
Medieval Resurrection	134	53%
Mercury Meltdown	145	66%
Metal Slug Anthology	150	91%
We're not too clued up on retro games, but we do know our <i>Metal Slug</i> and the <i>Anthology</i> is a great compilation.		
Metal Gear Acid 2	138	92%
More card-based espionage starring everyone's favourite mullet-head, with funky new cel-shaded graphics.		
Metal Gear Solid: Peace Walker	193	92%
A fantastic entry in the <i>Metal Gear Solid</i> series and one of the best games on PSP Wonderful.		
Metal Gear Solid: Portable Ops	150	91%
A proper <i>Metal Gear Solid</i> game on a portable machine. It was never likely to disappoint, and it didn't. A great title.		
Miami Vice	144	82%
Micro Machines V4	142	71%
Midnight Club 3: DUB Edition	134	57%
ModNation Racers	193	70%
Monster Hunter Freedom	140	81%
Monster Hunter Freedom 2	157	59%
Monster Hunter Freedom Unite	181	77%
MotoGP	146	75%
Motorstorm: Arctic Edge	184	72%
Myrnan Wars	179	85%
Namco Museum Battle Collection	136	68%
Naruto Shippuden Legends: Akatsuki Rising	185	46%
Naruto Ultimate Ninja Heroes 2	169	46%
NBA Ballers: Rebound	139	61%
Need For Speed Undercover	175	57%
Need For Speed Most Wanted	136	73%
No Heroes Allowed	199	69%
OutRun 2006: Coast 2 Coast	139	93%
The arcade classic comes to PSP and is just as good as it's ever been. The perfect game to play on a rainy Sunday afternoon.		
PaRappa The Rapper	155	88%
Patapon	163	86%
Patapon 2	177	87%
Patchwork Heroes	192	85%
Pirates Of The Caribbean	143	52%
PixelJunk Monster Deluxe	185	86%
Pro Evolution Soccer 2008	163	77%
Pocket Racers	144	49%
PoPoLoCrois	142	71%
Power Stone Collection	145	88%
PQ – Practical Intelligence Quotient	141	52%
Prince Of Persia Revelations	138	69%
Prince Of Persia: The Forgotten Sands	194	52%
Prinny: Can I Really Be The Hero?	181	80%
PSN Collection: Power Pack	173	70%
PSN Collection: Puzzle Pack	173	54%
Pursuit Force	134	83%
Pursuit Force: Extreme Justice	159	76%
Puzzle Chronicles	190	61%
Puzzle Quest	153	66%
R-Type Tactics	170	74%
Rainbow Six Vegas	156	78%
Ratchet & Clank: Size Matters	154	78%
Rengoku 2	144	72%
Resistance: Retribution	177	76%
Ridge Racer 2	145	78%
Ridge Racer	132	91%
Arguably the best launch game on the PSP <i>Ridge Racer</i> still stands up as one of the finest racing games for the system.		
Rock Band Unplugged	181	92%
Unplugged comes highly recommended. It's superb – there are few better rhythm-action games on the handheld.		
Rocky Balboa	150	68%
Secret Agent Clank	169	79%
Sega Mega Drive Collection	177	79%

game	issue	score
Sega Rally	158	90%
Very nearly as good as its PlayStation 3 counterpart. Which is a good thing because that's the best rally game money can buy.		
Shinobido: Tales Of The Ninja	150	60%
Silent Hill Origins	160	87%
Silent Hill: Shattered Memories	190	52%
Smash Court Tennis	154	58%
SOCOM Fire Team 2	154	70%
SOCOM: Fireteam Bravo 3	190	71%
SOCOM: Tactical Strike	160	85%
SOCOM: US Navy SEALs Fireteam Bravo	140	69%
Sonic Rivals	147	70%
Sonic Rivals 2	162	35%
Soul Calibur: Broken Destiny	183	92%
New modes and characters keep things interesting, while fights are as hectic and solid as ever.		
Spider-Man 3	162	32%
Spinout	149	81%
Spinter Cell: Essentials	139	71%
SSX On Tour	138	76%
Star Ocean: Second Evolution	178	78%
Star Trek: Tactical Assault	148	59%
Star Wars Battlefront II	137	74%
Star Wars Battlefront: Elite Squadron	187	65%
Star Wars: Lethal Alliance	148	69%
Star Wars: Renegade Squadron	160	78%
Street Fighter Alpha 3 Max	138	70%
Street Riders	140	29%
Super Monkey Ball Adventure	142	54%
Syphon Filter: Dark Mirror	140	90%
In the absence of a real <i>MGS</i> game, it's left to Gabe Logan to carry the stealthy torch, and he does a fine job.		
Tekken 6	187	90%
Fantastic to look at and fast and fluid to play. <i>Tekken 6</i> is the best game of the series on PSP.		
Tekken: Dark Resurrection	143	92%
<i>Tekken: Dark Resurrection</i> is instantly playable and provides the PSP's first great brawler.		
Tenchu: Shadow Assassins	179	71%
Tenchu: Time Of The Assassins	146	51%
The Con	153	59%
The Cube	153	64%
The Eye Of Judgment: Legends	191	57%
The Godfather Mob Wars	136	66%
The Lord Of The Rings: Tactics	136	66%
The Sims 2	137	71%
TNA Impact! Cross The Line	189	58%
TOCA 3	152	70%
Tokobot	140	79%
Tomb Raider: Anniversary	156	81%
Tomb Raider: Legend	140	72%
Twisted Metal Head-On	134	54%
UFC Undisputed 2010	197	80%
Ultimate Ghosts 'N Goblins	145	88%
Undead Knights	189	46%
Untold Legends: The Warrior's Code	140	59%
Valhalla Knights	158	49%
Valkyria Chronicles 2	196	87%
Valkyrie Profile: Lenneth	153	78%
Viewtiful Joe: Red Hot Rumble	140	82%
Virtua Tennis 3	152	88%
Warhammer 40,000: Squad Command	161	70%
What Did I Do To Deserve This My Lord!? 2	192	78%
WipEout Pulse	159	86%
WipEout Pure	138	91%
Exceeding all of our expectations as to what a handheld <i>WipEout</i> game could be, <i>Pure</i> is an essential PSP purchase.		
World Of Pool	156	43%
World Tour Poker	141	67%
World Tour Soccer 2	142	40%
Worms: Open Warfare 2	157	80%
WWE SmackDown! Vs. RAW 2006	137	84%
WWE SmackDown! Vs. RAW 2007	147	80%
World Rally Championship	134	67%




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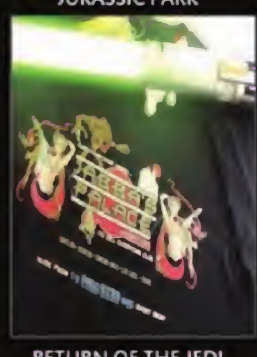






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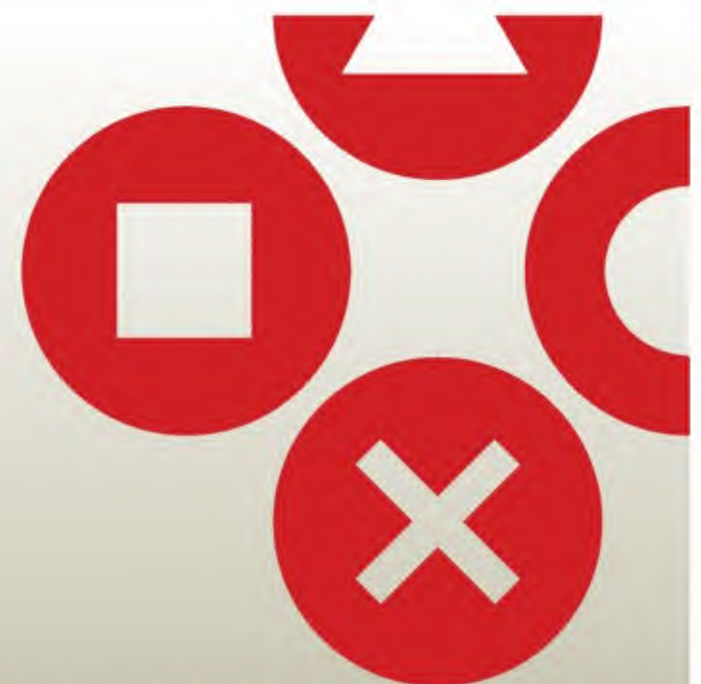
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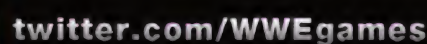
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